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EBERRON®

THE FORGE OF WAR™

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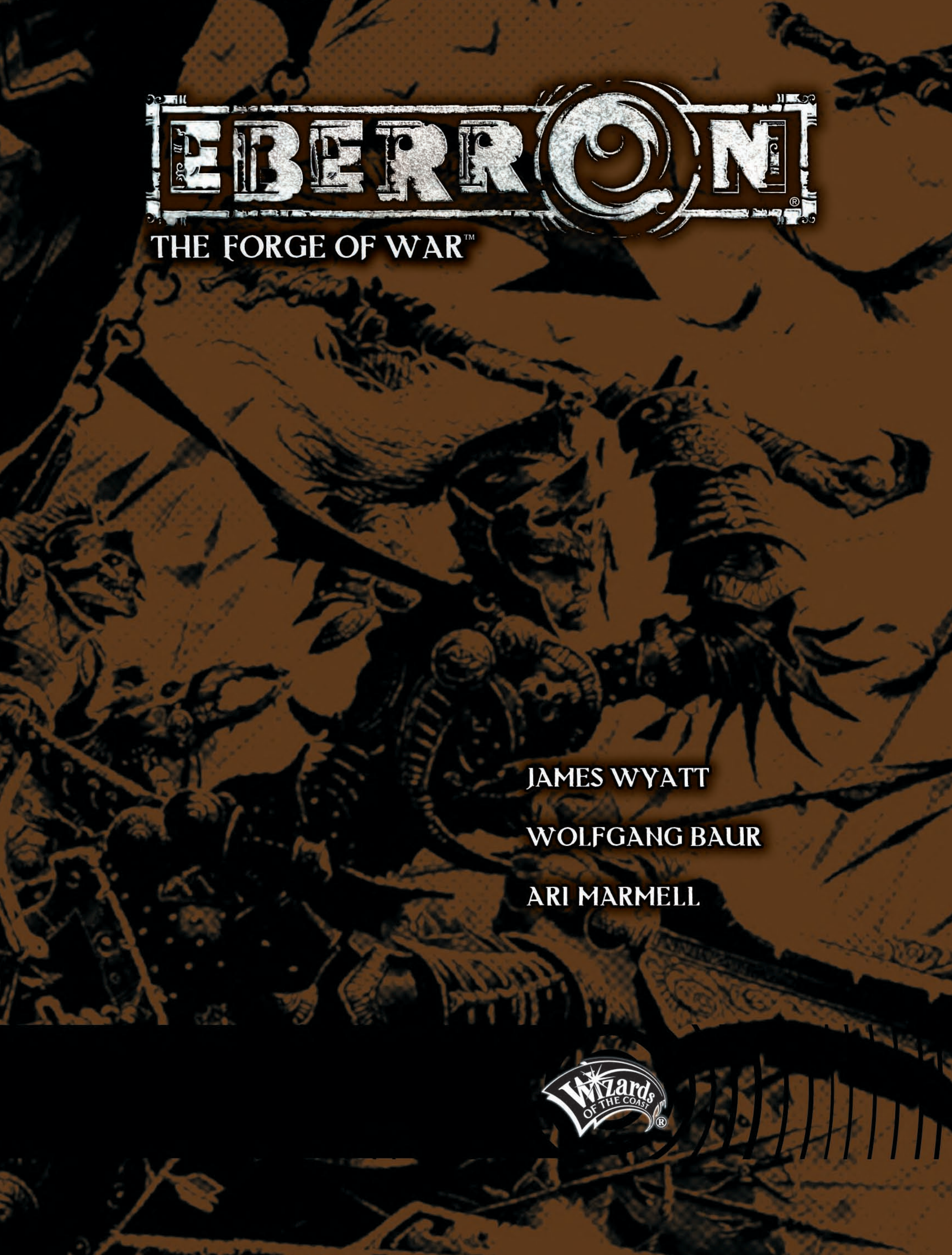

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Wizards of the Coast®

EBERRON

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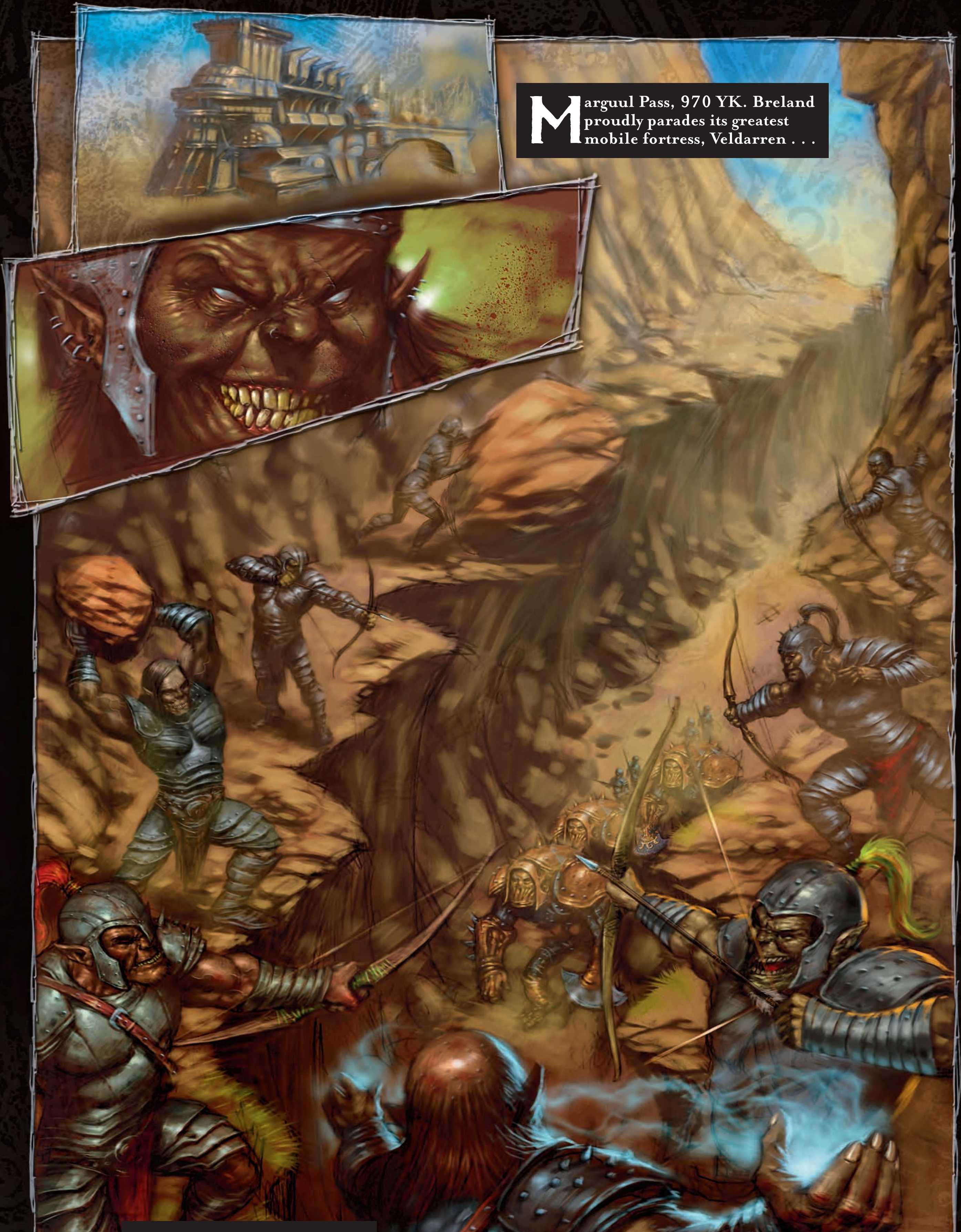

Marguul Pass, 970 YK. Breland proudly parades its greatest mobile fortress, Veldarren . . .
. . . into a battle it cannot win. The fall of Veldarren signaled the Brelish defeat.
PARRILLO 06

INTRODUCTION

The Last War is over.

After the Day of Mourning, the warring nations of Khorvaire quickly came to realize that victory was impossible—the best the beleaguered continent could hope for was a lasting peace. What had been Five Nations united under the throne of Galifar was now twelve sovereign kingdoms, shocked by the wasteland that was once Cyre. Two years later, representatives from these nations hammered out the Treaty of Thronehold, a set of agreements to cease hostilities and establish new boundaries. After a hundred years, Khorvaire was at peace.

Still, the Last War might never be over.

The Valenar agreed to the Treaty of Thronehold merely to assess their foes and force them to acknowledge the elves as a new nation. Aundair signed the treaty, but longs to reclaim both Thaliost and the Eldeen Reaches. The king of Karrnath works for peace, but many in his nation will not be content until the continent rests under their control. The refugees from Cyre are desperate to discover the cause of the Mourning and ensure that whoever is responsible pays dearly.

Few people are willing to say it aloud, but they all know in their hearts that the peace of Thronehold is a fragile thing indeed.

The Forge of War supplement is about the war, of course, but every other EBERRON game book and adventure is about the war, in some respect. Every adventurer is at least partially defined by what he did during the war, and many adventuring sites are ruins created by the Last War (the Mournland being only the largest such place).

The Forge of War delves further into the events, personalities, and repercussions of the great conflict. Whether your EBERRON campaign takes place at the beginning, during the middle, or after the end of the Last War, this supplement will enrich it.

USING THIS BOOK

The Forge of War is focused on the events, armies, battlefields, heroes, and magic of the Last War, but it's designed primarily to help players and Dungeon Masters in a standard EBERRON campaign—that is, one set in the years just after end of the Last War.

Chapter One: The Course of the War presents a chronological overview of the major events of the century-long conflict. The discourse is taken primarily from an introductory textbook used at Soladas College of the Library of Korranberg, as annotated by the renowned Zil librarian Augusta Wainwocket—as close to an impartial source as can be found. (Commentary taken directly from this source is interspersed throughout the chapter, presented in *italic* type and set off from surrounding text by blank lines.)

Chapter Two: Guide to the Last War features numerous encyclopedic entries concerning major events, key locations, important organizations (including the dragonmarked houses and national armed forces), and concepts of the war.

Chapter Three: Heroes of the Last War includes backgrounds that focus on wartime activities, and ideas for lasting scars—of the physical or emotional variety—that might help define characters. In addition, spells, magic items, and teamwork benefits provide new options for any EBERRON campaign.

Chapter Four: The Last War Campaign deals with various ways to use the materials in *The Forge of War*. It discusses three different campaign styles and gives suggestions to Dungeon Masters for running each one, or a combination of them.

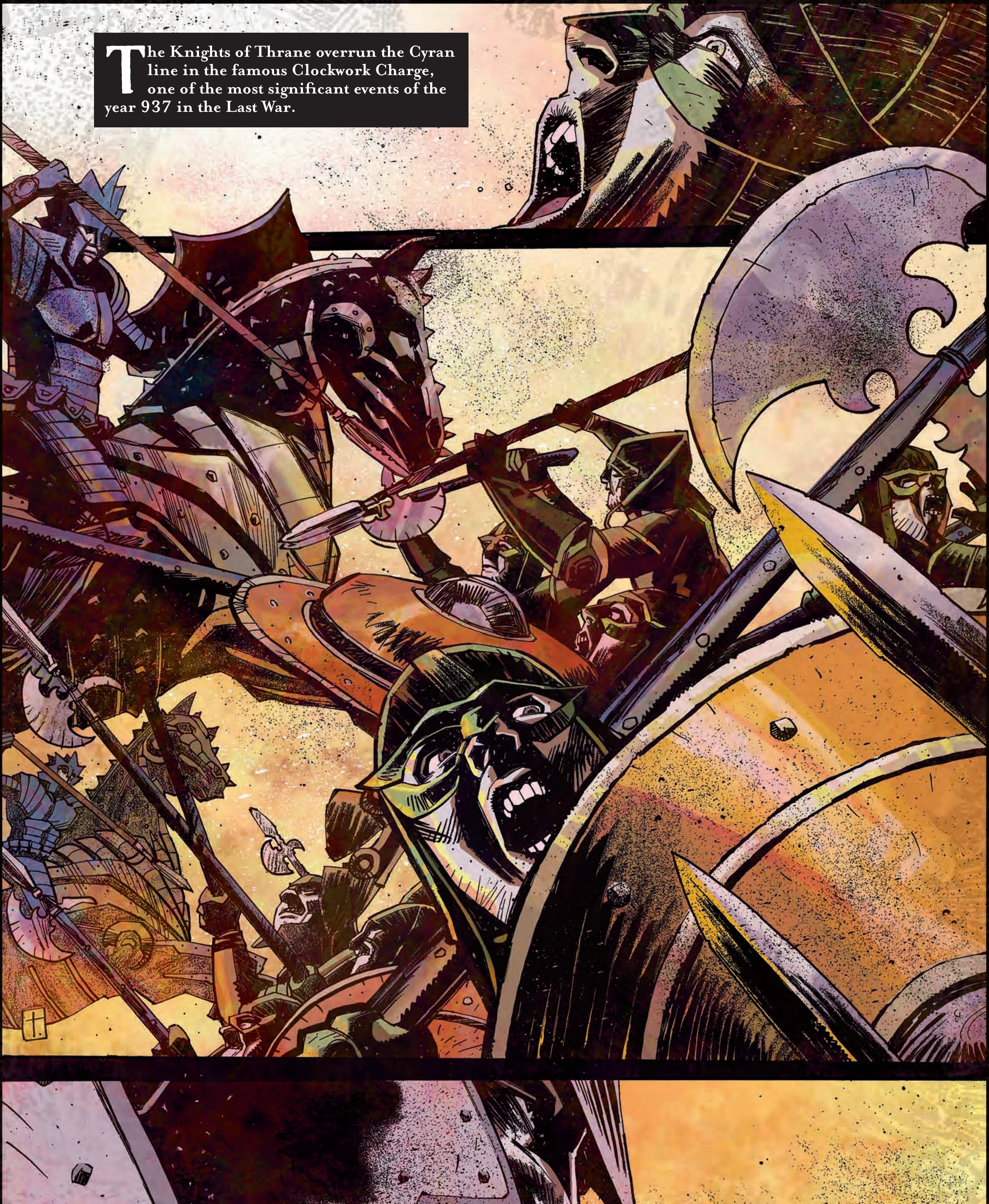
If you are playing in any other DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaign, the material in this book can be used to flesh out a war-torn region of the world, to add depth to military characters and armies, or simply provide new treasures and opponents for the characters.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

The Forge of War relies on the core DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules as set forth in the *Player's Handbook (PH), Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG),* and *Monster Manual (MM).* In addition, you need a copy of the *EBERRON Campaign Setting (ECS)* for the big picture of the war-ravaged setting and for the campaign-specific rules in that volume.

This book makes use of new rules mechanics introduced in *Heroes of Battle, Player's Handbook II,* and *Magic Item Compendium*. If you don't have some of those titles, you can still use nearly everything in this book—we've provided the information you need to incorporate rules such as teamwork benefits, magic standards, and magic item sets.

Throughout this book, abbreviations are often used to denote game elements and other materials that appear in certain supplements. Those supplements and their abbreviations are as follows: *Complete Adventurer* (CAd), *Complete Arcane* (CAr), *Complete Mage* (CM), *Complete Warrior* (CW), *Heroes of Horror* (HH), *Miniatures Handbook* (MH), *Monster Manual II* (MM2), *Monster Manual III* (MM3), *Player's Handbook II* (PH2), *Spell Compendium* (SC), and *Tome of Magic* (ToM).



The Knights of Thrane overrun the Cyran line in the famous Clockwork Charge, one of the most significant events of the year 937 in the Last War.

CHAPTER ONE

THE COURSE OF THE WAR

Though the land called Galifar was nominally a kingdom, it stretched across a entire continent. King Jarot was a king among kings, and his children answered only to him. The blood of Galifar used society's ties—lightning rail, message stations, crucial rivers, and caravan routes—to keep the realm unified, peaceful, and rich. Treasure flowed into its coffers, and its armies gleamed with arms and armor capable of holding off the forces of any invader.

The few nations around the edges of Galifar, such as the Lhazaar Principalities and the Demon Wastes, posed no real threat to its citizens. They were distant foes, easily ignored. The greatest danger to the empire was not outside its borders. It was within.

Galifar was an empire in everything but name. And empires don't die well.

The recital in these pages attempts the monumental task of summarizing over one hundred years of history spread across an entire continent. Unfortunately, a great deal of information about the Last War was lost in the continual upheaval, chaos, and bloodshed. Recounts of these years are buried in layers of propaganda, speculation, insinuation, accusation, and paranoia. Likely no one in Khorvaire will ever know the entire truth.

These pages represents our librarians' best efforts to piece together voluminous and ofttimes contradictory accounts. If nothing else, this work seeks to combat the old falsehoods that are repeated endlessly to justify lasting animosity. It is hoped that commentaries such as this one will aid in elucidation and engender continued study.

ROOTS OF THE LAST WAR

In the monumental task of war, true triumph evades those without an appreciation for history.

—Analects of War by Karrn the Conqueror

At its root, the Last War was a war of succession. The dispute that sparked the conflict was over which of King Jarot's five children would ascend to the throne of Galifar after his death. According to almost nine centuries of tradition, that honor should have gone to Mishann, Jarot's eldest and the ruler of Cyre. Upon King Jarot's death, Mishann's brothers and sister would abdicate their rule of the other nations, and Mishann's children would be installed as governor-princes of the Five Nations. That was how succession had been handled for the entire history of Galifar.

Instead, Thalin, Kaius, and Wroann rejected Mishann's succession. Their refusal to respect a central tradition that had kept the empire unified for nearly a thousand years sparked a war.

Many lay the blame for a century of warfare at the feet of the three rebellious scions, but such a view is far too simplistic. A closer look reveals deeper causes for conflict—causes that stretch back in time at least to the unification of Galifar itself.

Before Galifar I's unification wars, Khorvaire was dominated—though not entirely controlled—by five independent nation-states. In the southwest, the nation of Wroat had been founded by Breggor Firstking in the area of present-day Vathirond. Its people journeyed south and engulfed the once-independent city-state of Shaarat, now called Sharn. Far to the north, the nation of Thaliost stretched across the coastline and down into the waterway that would come to be known as Scions Sound. Southwest of Thaliost, Daskara stretched across fertile plains. In the southeast, the small but wealthy nation of Seaside had grown up around Kraken Bay and expanded northward. To the northeast, the descendants of Karrn the Conqueror ruled a nation that bore his name. These separate kingdoms had existed for thousands of years and had evolved fiercely nationalistic cultures.

Although Galifar I united the five realms and thus succeeded where Karrn had failed, it is no real surprise that his accomplishment was temporary. He and his heirs clearly never eliminated the ingrained attitudes that led the people to think of themselves first as Karrns, Aundairians, Thranes, Cyrans, or Brelish—and only secondarily as citizens of Galifar. Indeed, his succession practice of placing the ruler's children at the head of five principalities served to reinforce the ancient divisions. When crisis came, the people and the rulers easily fell back on old viewpoints, drawing lines between themselves and their neighbors based on borders over two thousand years old.

The tindertwig of succession ignited a vast powderkeg; Galifar had long been on a war footing. For much of his reign, King Jarot was terrified of war. He devoted most of his considerable talents to enhancing his kingdom's defenses. He perceived no end of threats—conspiracies involving the dragonmarked houses, plots among the aristocracy of his realm, imminent invasion from Aerenal, a draconic scourge from Argonnessen. He feared the Inspired of Riedra (though he knew almost nothing about them) and dreaded the mysteries of Xen'drik.

Jarot's fears fed a military buildup the likes of which Khorvaire had never before seen. Each area bristled with armaments. Jarot instigated the research that would eventually lead to the modern warforged, and himself lived to see the first construct soldiers arrayed amid his armies. At his command, House Cannith began work on the mobile fortresses that culminated in the deployment of Breland's floating strongholds. With the king's urging and approval, House Deneith heavily recruited mercenaries from among the continent's more monstrous races.

In hindsight, Jarot's mental state appears to have been imbalanced. At the time, however, none could challenge his viewpoints, and few had any interest in doing so.

What caused Jarot's nightmarish preoccupation with an invasion from beyond his kingdom? There are many answers.

Some claim an insidious alien entity caused Jarot's madness. They say that the being infiltrated the king's dreams and planted the seeds of his paranoid imaginings. If that were the case, though, why did no outside force intervene in the war once it began?

Others claim that the true threat to Galifar came from the Demon Wastes. They posit a force of entropy and destruction that spreads from Ashtakala, the city of ghosts, along pathways as much spiritual as material, corrupting every empire and bringing it to eventual ruin. This profoundly ahistorical view treats the fall of Galifar as an event unaffected by any immediate circumstances except the constant influence of a long-dead city of demons.

Finally, a few claim the scions' complicity is far deeper than suspected. The five rulers all conspired at one time or another to spread doubts about the strength of the kingdom to their father. Their insecurity and selfishness fed Jarot's tendencies, exacerbating the tension and increasing the military power at their disposal.

All of these theories have one characteristic in common: They are searching for a deeper explanation for something that seems inexplicable. In truth, the people of Khorvaire had spent nearly a half-century expecting war to erupt on their shores at any moment. Under the weight of that expectation, it would have been surprising if war had not broken out.

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THE WAR BEGINS

Great advantage flows to the commander who first recognizes the commencement of hostilities, then acts decisively and with overwhelming vigor.

—Analects of War by Karrn the Conqueror

Jarot's eldest scion was his daughter Mishann, who ruled Cyre. The second oldest was Thalin of Thrane. He was widely rumored to be considered for the title of regent, since Mishann had been a bit wild in her youth—wild enough to frighten some of the more staid nobles of the realm. Thus, both Mishann and Thalin thought they might be named supreme ruler.

King Jarot gave only Mishann his blessing when he lay on his deathbed in Thronehold. The king bade his son Wrogar of Aundair, who was there at the time, to support his choice. Wrogar gave an oath to his father. Thalin, Kaius of Karrnath, and Wroann of Breland were not present at the king's death, and were bound by no similar pledges.

At Jarot's state funeral shortly thereafter, Mishann approached her siblings to discuss the details of her coronation as Queen of Galifar. Thalin, Kaius, and Wroann refused to listen, rejecting her succession. They vowed to pit their personal guards against any such action. Wroann, in particular, declared that it was time for increased liberty and democracy, and that hidebound compliance with tradition was inappropriate. Wrogar backed Mishann's claim, but the two of them had insufficient forces or, at that time, desire to exert their will on their siblings. The siblings and their retinues quit Thronehold with the succession issue wholly unresolved.

In late 894, Mishann formally declared herself Queen of Cyre and United Galifar from her capital. She also gave her blessing to Wrogar's announcement that he would assume the title of King of Aundair. Queen Mishann then instructed her strongest supporters to gather at the port of Eston to sail to Thronehold. She sought coronation over the whole realm when she reached the island, but in truth invited only the nobles of Aundair and Cyre to attend.

Breland, Thrane, and Karrnath issued separate declarations challenging Mishann's claim to the imperial island. The rulers each decreed that they too would henceforth be known as kings and queens. King Thalin and Queen Wroann mustered their house guards and previously retained mercenaries; Thrane and Breland were ready to fight, in small numbers at least, within days. King Kaius declared martial law and began mobilizing his warlords, but Karrnathi forces were still gathering when the outriders of his allies arrived on the shores of Scions Sound.

Even without Kaius's forces, Thrane and Breland troops outnumbered the opposition; Aundair and Cyre had been unable to combine their armies. Indeed, Wrogar was rallying his beloved rangers from the Eldeen hinterlands when he learned that Thalin and Wroann were marching to stop Mishann from claiming Thronehold.

Reaching Eston without incident, Mishann set sail with a fleet largely composed of transports and merchant ships. Mishann did not expect her siblings to escalate the conflict into a shooting war. Still, when her vessels reached the area around Thronehold, the lookouts reported a powerful force arrayed against her. Thalin had ordered the bulk of his ships to blockade the island. The advance elements met, and the allies began attacking—Mishann realized then she would be forced to fight. Rather than risk her entire force on the waves, she turned her ships and slid into the southwestern leg of Scions Sound. The few Thrane ships patrolling Flamekeep's harbor refused to challenge Cyre, and the Thrane navy, with orders to secure Thronehold, did not pursue. Mishann was able to bring her troops safely to land near Traelyn Bridge, south of Flamekeep. There, she learned of the combined Thrane and Brelish army moving to intercept her. Knowing she was outnumbered, she turned north seeking to cross into Aundair and link up with Wrogar.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

—A Cyran noble hires the adventurers as part of his retinue for a trip to Thronehold. On the way, he befriends them and enlists their aid in attempting to discover King Jarot's plans for succession.

—A mysterious benefactor claims to represent a group of important concerned citizens of Galifar, including members of the royal family. He claims King Jarot is being influenced by an alien entity that has pushed the aging monarch toward war. The spy reveals a magical device that will detect all manner of possession and mind control. He asks them to scout the halls of Thronehold and find the source of the king's corruption.

894

BATTLE OF THE GALIFAR HEIRS

The first major engagement of the war was fought on the western shore of Scions Sound, just south of Flamekeep.

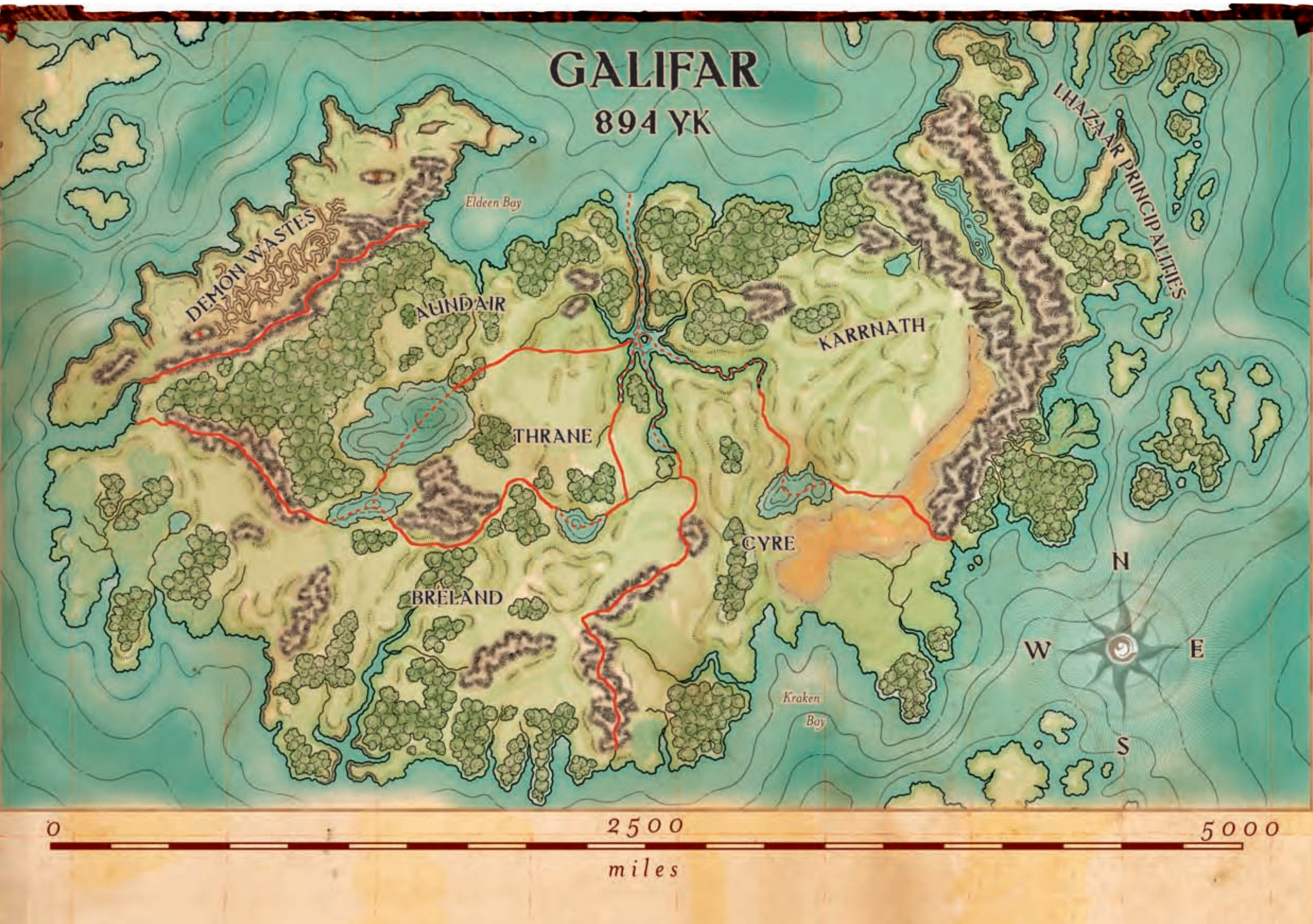
By moving quickly, Thalin and Wroann caught the outmanned forces of Cyre as they gathered on the road west of Traelyn Bridge. Thalin was eager to strike the first blow; he, after all, spoke loudest against the succession, claiming his "divine right" of kingship. He was also on his home ground. With 500 heavy foot, 800 light knights, and 2,000 peasant levies at his command, his was by far the most dominating force. Breland brought only the Queen's Swords, an elite force of 150 heavy foot, and the Free Company of Archers, a group of 200 longbowmen. In all, the newly declared Queen of Galifar faced over 3,500 enemies.

By contrast, Cyre had mustered only the 200 elite cavalry of the Queen's Guard and the 500 heavy halberdiers of her Honor Guard. In hostile territory far from the Aundairian border, Mishann realized that she would be decimated whether she fled or stood her ground. Still, she prepared to sell herself and her forces dearly. Miraculously, Wrogar's Wardens of the Wood arrived at the Cyre camp by magical means, passing without trace to appear in full battle order. His forces included some 1,000 elves, druids, and centaurs. Although the loyalist forces were still outnumbered, the outcome of the battle was no longer a foregone conclusion.

The two armies lined up, heralds met and exchanged challenges, and finally, about noon, the armies clashed. The Queen's Swords of Breland engaged directly with the Queen's Guard of Cyre, and a rumor circulated that Wroann had been slain (she was only wounded). The Aundairian forces rained arrows and magic upon Thrane's peasant levies, and the undisciplined troops soon broke and ran. Still, Cyre and Aundair had no answer for Thalin's heavy cavalry, some of the best troops on the continent. Their thunderous charge after the peasants broke smashed into the left flank of the Cyre army and scattered the Wardens of the Wood.

The arrival of Aundair's force, led by their ferocious bearlike king, had made a difference, however. His troops allowed Cyre to retreat in good order to the south. The next morning, the forces of Kaius arrived, too late. The militant Karrns had missed the first battle, much to their new king's displeasure. His riders pursued the Cyran and Aundairian forces, but to no avail. Mishann and her remaining troops crossed the sound north of Aruldusk and reformed in the fortress at Eston. The queen ordered most of the army to hold the city, maintaining it as a staging ground, ensuring that House Cannith's base of operations remained intact, and preserving access to crucial iron and adamantine sources. She then returned to Metrol to oversee the mustering of greater armies.

As mentioned, Galifar was divided into semiautonomous regions throughout its history. Still, centuries of unity did have an impact on the politics and economics



of the continent. A full understanding of the course of the war, particularly its early years, requires a discussion of those interdependencies.

Much has been written about Karrnathi military prowess; it has long been the defining feature of that nation. The most influential military minds of Galifar were schooled in the Military Academy at Rekkenmark before the war. This meant that strategy and tactics, much of it derived from the writings of Karrn the Conqueror in his Analects of War, were relatively uniform throughout the land. Karrnath also produced steadfast and hard-working laborers. Although led by others in most cases, many of Galifar's major construction projects, including the miles of lightning rail, owe a great deal to Karrn workers. Karrnath's greatest weakness was food. Although competent producers of meat, wine, and dairy products, Karrnath's people were highly dependent on grains and other imports from elsewhere in Khorvaire.

Aundair excellence was as renowned as Karrnathi arms, particularly in the arena of magic. Embodied by the Arcane Congress, Aundair has long been a symbol of arcane accomplishment. Less well known, but no less important, were the skilled Aundairian workers. True crafters and scholars in nearly every field could be found among the villages of that northern nation. Aundair was also one of the two "breadbaskets" of Galifar. The Eldeen Reaches and those lands bordering it have always been bountiful. The nation's greatest weaknesses were a small population and an arrogance among its leaders. This situation resulted in a significant cultural divide between "the gentry" of the west and "those closer to the natural order" in the east.

Thrane, the other major prewar exporter of food stuffs, saw itself as the heart of Galifar. Centrally located, this vastly fertile land overflowed with dedicated and passionate people. For the most part a nation of farmers, the populace embraced the "new" religion of the Silver Flame and attempted to bring "good" into all aspects of their lives. At times intolerant, Thrane was more often generous and gregarious. Although the Knights of Thrane formed a proud and elite force, the country was not strong militarily. No natural barriers existed, and the majority of the people saw no need to make the tough sacrifices that others, particularly the Karrns, saw as part of daily life.

Breland had long kept itself apart from the majority of Galifar. Despite boasting the continent's largest city, Breland was considered a relatively backward and unfashionable place. A Cyran poet named it "a nation of tinkerers and free-thinkerers." For their part, the Brelish saw the other nations as overly bound by tradition and far too concerned with appearances. Then again, Breland could afford to adopt an outsider's perspective. Her abundant lands contained fertile fields and vast natural resources. The nation boasted widespread light industry and a large and skilled labor force. Self-sufficiency was the Brelish creed. Breland's weaknesses stemmed from her lack of interest or understanding of the other nations, and her reluctance to involve herself in "outside" affairs. Truly, Breland was the sleeping giant of Galifar.

Wondrous Cyre was the soul of Galifar. Cyran appreciation spread the length and breadth of the continent, setting standards and aspirations for everyone who considered themselves a part of the empire. Bards, poets, writers, artisans, and scholars poured out a constant stream of creative endeavors, some of them truly brilliant. This cultural hegemony was matched in the arena of diplomacy and negotiation. Cyran administrators, liaisons, and judges could be found throughout Galifar, settling disputes and bridging divides. Cyre also contained sufficiently fertile lands and, given the House Cannith home city of Eston, her top-level industry was unmatched. On the other hand, the nation was weak militarily, relying on local police forces, Deneith mercenaries, and Karrnathi soldiers to keep the peace. It was also supremely arrogant; it was accustomed to issuing orders and having others comply.

Thus was the empire interconnected. Against this background, the Last War was fought.

895

DIPLOMACY'S FIRST FAILURES

Thinking that a negotiated settlement might still be possible, Mishann sought an end to the fighting. She and Wrogar proposed a simple partition into two or three kingdoms. Kaius, as yet deprived of the glory of battle, sabotaged the entire effort, urging his allies to reject the treaties. The only lasting result of the months of "peace-seeking" was to allow expatriates from every nation to return home, some just ahead of overzealous locals.

The talks broke off when Thrane, Karrnath, and Breland laid siege to the city of Eston in the first extended campaign of the war. Thalin wanted no more Cyre expeditions launching themselves from that port, and was concerned with the force already established there. The siege initially went well for the three allies, since Thrane and Breland controlled the sea lanes (the bulk of the Aundairian navy was engaged with Karrnath in a struggle for control in the north). Still, House Cannith was responsible for much of the city's buildings and defense works and, not surprisingly, the dragonmarked house had rendered the city nigh impregnable. When Wrogar's rangers staged yet another unexpected arrival in the west and cut the lightning rail supply lines at the Aruldusk station, a lack of supplies began limiting the attackers' ability to launch sustained assaults.

Ultimately, the siege was doomed when the three usurpers began quarreling about who would sit upon the Galifar throne. Thalin had already declared his divine right to the crown, and Wroann supported that claim, but only because she was promised greater liberties for all citizens and offered the title of Queen of Breland and Cyre. Kaius rejected Thalin's claim, declaring that he, from the land of Karrn and Galifar, should inherit the crown.

With the continued raids on their supply lines, distrust engendered by Kaius's refusal to pledge himself to Thalin, word of a strong Cyran force approaching, and a powerful sally by the emboldened city garrison, Thrane and Breland decided to cross back over Scions Sound and abandon the siege in 896. Unable to maintain the stranglehold himself, Kaius was forced to withdraw; again, he was denied honorable battle. The armies of Karrnath plundered and burned their way across northern Cyre in a fury, but retreated in the face of Cyran cavalry and heavy foot who threatened Kaius's extended supply lines.

This falling-out at the first siege of Eston would prove to be merely the first of many. All of Jarot's children had been born to rule, and had gained experience as rulers within the larger Galifar empire. Each had supporters and plans for their own elevation to the throne. In truth, all five scions of Jarot were ill-tempered and accustomed to having things their way. All had their excuses for hanging onto power, varying from divine right to greater experience to Jarot's favor to the defense of freedom and liberty. Jarot had encouraged his children to become powerful rulers, and he did not recognize that national and personal interests had aligned against the continued control of the empire from Thronehold. The extreme stubbornness of Jarot's children set many precedents and weakened any attempt at diplomacy throughout the years to come.

895

THALIN'S VISION

Fueled by religious fervor, King Thalin believed his destiny was to rule far more than just Thrane. He could rely on powerful allies in the Church of the Silver Flame, and the feeling among the nobles of Thalin's court reinforced his sense of entitlement to the throne: Mishann was no more worthy, and far less pious, than he was. The people of Cyre, with their debauchery and their emphasis on fashion rather than wisdom, could not possibly have bred a woman worthy of the throne.

Even so, the nobles, the Church, and the people were divided over how to proceed. Everyone looked for someone or something to confirm Thalin's claim; most desirable would be a divine mandate or a proclamation from the ruling body of the Church of the Silver Flame, the Diet of Cardinals. The group was much too shrewd and conservative to take such a bold step, however.

Thalin decided that he must act first. He needed to improve his secret network of informers, and so he quietly appointed a spymaster. The newly proclaimed king also asked his most trusted dukes and barons to significantly expand their armies. More publicly, he decided to strengthen his ties to the church, so he underwent a ritual cleansing and vigil at the heart of the church. For twenty days, "Good King" Thalin fasted and prayed. On the twentieth day, he experienced a vision of the couatl, enfolding him in silvery feathers, opening his eyes, and showing him a land where silver fires sprang up in the eyes, hearts, and minds of every soul. He knew then that it was his destiny to bring the Flame to all. Mishann's succession was not just a mistake; it was blasphemy.

The proclamation of Thalin's Vision caused immediate controversy throughout Galifar. Why didn't Javor Daran, the Keeper of the Flame for over twenty years, experience this vision? The prelate's power and skill had been tested, trusted, and understood for decades. Others saw nothing amiss with the Flame granting the king spiritual strength; war loomed, and divine aid was most welcome. Cynics and skeptics—even within the church itself—discounted the pronouncement, mocking it as "Thalin's convenient vision of infallibility." The Keeper, a close family friend to the king, and the Cardinals did not formally condone Thalin's Vision, but neither did they reject it.

Internal debate over Thalin's Vision all but ceased when Aundair moved aggressively, striking south along the shores of Lake Galifar. Aundairian forces quickly overran the least populated of Thrane's territories—an area south of Passage to the Blackcaps and west from the lake to Ghalt. King Wrogar's forces, under the command of Haldren ir'Brassek (see page), even took Cragwar briefly. The Arcane Congress at Arcanix raised no objection to the Aundairian occupation, instead declaring itself a noncombatant. A hastily organized and weak counterstrike by Thrane recaptured Cragwar but was otherwise easily repulsed. This was but the first of countless battles that would bathe the land around Ghalt in blood.

Thalin's Vision marked the beginning of what has come to be regarded as a dark time in Thrane history, even by those currently administering the theocratic nation.

In truth, Thalin's description is not, on its face, overly dire nor at odds with common church rhetoric. The Church of the Silver Flame has long sought to embrace all Khorvairians, viewing such widespread faith as a cornerstone of achieving a living paradise. The real conflict has always centered on the means to this goal. The "good" church emphasizes teaching and acceptance to bring outsiders to its truths; the "bad" church stirs intolerant passion and mandates conversion. The history of the Church of the Silver Flame is defined by the struggle between these two approaches.

896~905

KARRNATH REVERSALS

Armies are the forge of victory, and strong armies require strong nations. Plague, famine, and loss of will—far more than battlefield reversals—can shatter the greatest army.

—Analects of War by Karrn the Conqueror

At the start of the war, Karrnath's standing army was larger, better trained, and better equipped, and had higher morale than any of its neighbors. Still, it failed to put a quick end to the war—partly because of its underestimation of Aundairian audacity and Cyran toughness, and partly because of pure bad luck, as a horrific series of national catastrophes wracked the land.

Kaius's travails began in 896, the Year of the Long Winter, which featured a largely nonexistent spring growing season and failed harvests across his land. The cities of Karrnath, cut off from the bounty of the Eldeen Reaches, deprived by hoarding in Thrane, and considered a lower priority than the armies, began to starve. Cyre's nobles along the southern border, hearing of supply difficulties, launched a series of surprise attacks against less fortified areas, primarily targeting logistics. Although discipline remained strict and desertion was minimal, the vast might of Karrnath was effectively paralyzed by lack of provisions. For a time, the borders remained intact primarily as a result of a new band of warriors, the Order of the Emerald Claw, which emphasized flexibility, self-sufficiency, honor, and accomplishment regardless of sacrifice. The most imaginative of the Karrn military personnel broke ranks to join the Emerald Claw and paid a heavy price for their independent ways, but a legend arose that would serve the order well in the years to come.

The spring of 897 was just as bad. Karrnathi held the line against Cyran raids, but Kaius needed an offensive victory to keep his restless nobles in line. Viewing the Aundairians as weak, he launched an assault across the White Arch Bridge, and even secured Thaliost for a time. This gave the Karrns a badly needed triumph and restored morale for a time, but the critical shortages in food undermined

ADVENTURE SEEDS

—The PCs form part of the regular guard of one of the scions and have accompanied their lord to King Jarot's funeral at Thronehold. Shortly after the lengthy formal ceremonies are completed, word starts to circulate that the succession is in doubt. Tasked with either finding Queen Mishann and her retinue or ensuring that the queen escapes without incident, the characters are involved in the very first conflict of the Last War.

—Advance scouts for either the rebel or loyalist armies, the characters encounter their counterparts on the other side. They must decide how long to fight, knowing that their commanders must be apprised as soon as possible that the enemy is near.

everything. Fearing a complete collapse if the true extent of the failed harvest became known, Kaius withdrew his troops and set them to controlling his own populace.

In this dark hour, the Blood of Vol, long a fixture in Karrnathi religious life, offered previously unknown resources. Fresh food began arriving in the cities. Miraculously, the harvest proved far less dire than predicted. Church attendance skyrocketed, and a number of prominent members of the famous Order of the Emerald Claw were seen at services. Karrnath remained severely weakened, but the specter of mass starvation receded. Even King Kaius seemed to have been granted a new lease on life, appearing at citizen rallies and troop entrenchments throughout the country. It was said that the king drove himself relentlessly, refusing all but the briefest periods of rest while his country was imperiled.

A number of historians, principally outside Karrnath's borders, raise dark questions about the Blood of Vol's intervention in the northern kingdom. They point to the remarkable reversal in food supplies and the enormous upswing in Blood of Vol fervor as evidence that the Seekers used vast supernatural prowess to aid Karrnath. They also view the subsequent introduction of undead troops, largely championed by those beholden to the Blood of Vol, as suggestive of the dark heart of the Blood of Vol's power.

It is difficult to separate bias from fact in these accounts. Whatever its power and influence, the Blood of Vol could not contain the subsequent Karrnathi plague, make the army invincible, or continually supply vast amounts of food. Despite the aid the church provided Kaius (some say the faithful were responsible for his remaining on the throne), the king never formally converted to the religion or issued more than the most perfunctory proclamations in its favor.

Unfortunately for Karrnath, no sooner had the food shortages eased than plague struck Westhaven on Karrn Bay, quickly spreading to Atur and Korth. In months, fully a third of the Karrnathi soldiers were either dead or incapacitated. The losses among the regular populace, who did not enjoy the same levels of food or medicine, were devastating.

By the spring of 898, the Aundairian navy had managed to force the bulk of Karrnath's ships north of the White Arch Bridge. That enabled a sizable force to cross over Scions Sound and begin a long-standing campaign in the north. Aundair's armies overran Rekkenmark and pushed far to the east, even approaching the Karrn River. When word reached Cyre, raids launched from the south struck deep into Karrnath, again focusing on supply lines and communications.

The extent of Karrnath's predicament at the time was not fully understood outside the highest echelons of the nation's aristocracy. Even so, all knew starvation hovered and plague stalked the land. It is a testament to Karrnathi courage and tenacity that the nation's depleted armies did not fail. In the worst of circumstances, they stood firm, exacting a price for every mile of land they gave up.

Then came one of the first of the Last War's many defining moments. During the spring and summer of 898, new armies arose within the catacombs of the City of Night, as necromancers and corpse collectors created the first undead Legion of Atur. Rushed into position in time to face Aundair's army at the Karrn River crossing, the massed undead warriors turned back the assault.

Although crucial in keeping Karrnath's fighting capacity intact, the creation of undead soldiers was a diplomatic disaster. Those outside Karrnath's borders, and even a few inside, were repulsed by the practice, particularly when it became known that undead were being created from the bodies of Karrnathi foes. These feelings deepened when more advanced undead soldiers—which became known as Karrnathi skeletons and zombies—began to trickle up to the front lines. In truth, Karrnath had little choice but to use the undead troops; surrender or collapse were the only other options.

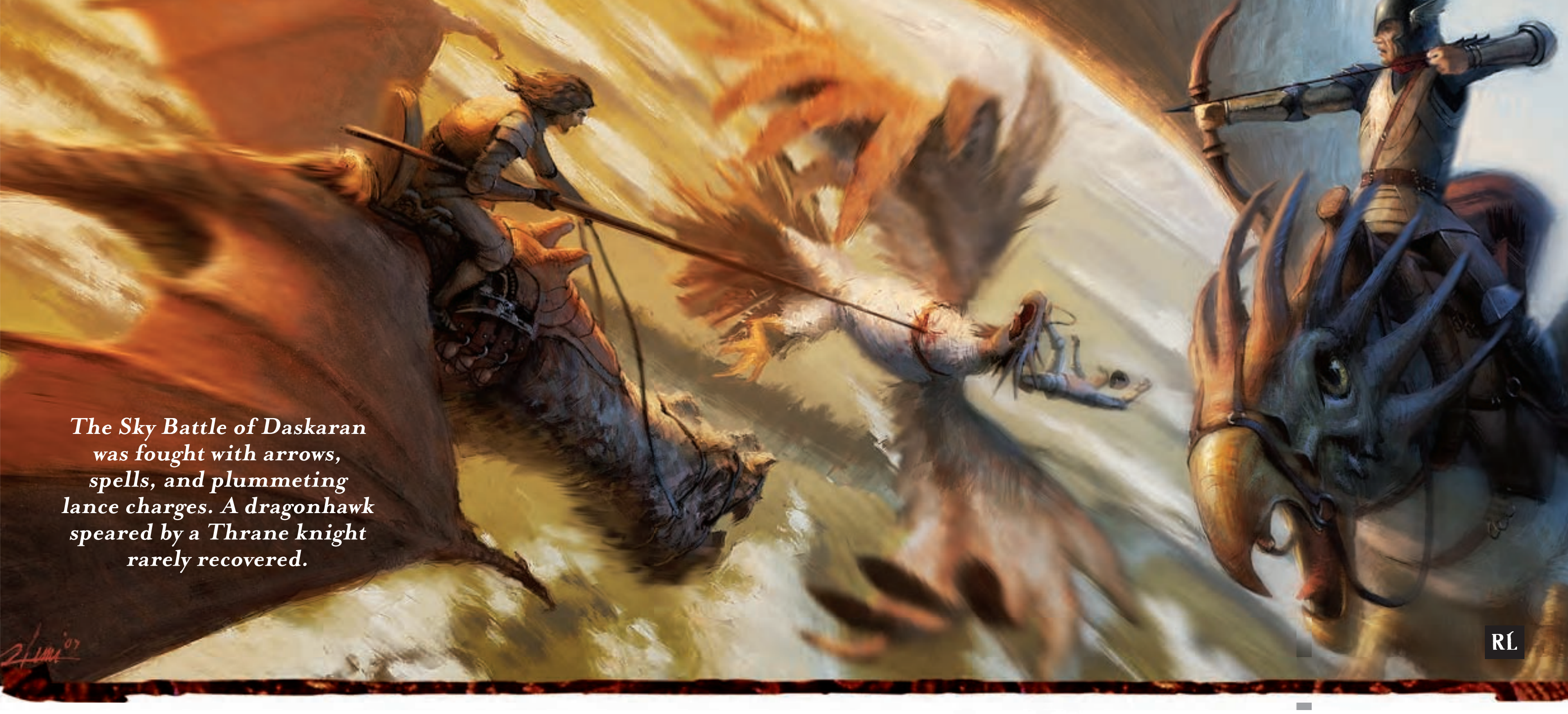
In 899, Karrnath navy ships, led by the Bloodsails of Farlnen, sortied into Scions Sound and bombarded the White Arch Bridge, destroying it and cutting Aundair's primary supply line. This forced the invaders to halt and regroup. It was several months before Aundairian artifice and sorcery could rebuild the link.

By 900, advanced Karrnathi skeletons and zombies began arriving in large numbers. Ten thousand strong, they halted Aundair's relentless, grinding progress and prevented a siege of Korth, pushing Aundair's pike, wands, and infantry from the banks of the Karrn River. Exhausted from months of intense fighting, the Aundairian troops retreated closer to Rekkenmark.

The next year, Karrnath suffered a second bout of the plague at home. By the turn of the century, the feared military might of Karrnath was, at best, a largely stationary and defensive entity. In order to consolidate its forces and minimize supply lines, the nation essentially abandoned its prewar holdings south of Karrlakton and east of Vulyar; Cyre enjoyed the luxury of ignoring its eastern border. Although it would be decades before the country could contemplate major offensive operations, Karrnathi pride and military tradition would not allow it to be completely passive. Through force of will and appeals to elite soldiers, King Kaius was able to organize various small-scale sorties. For the remainder of the war, these raids ranged across the continent—from the northern coast of Aundair to the Eldeen Reaches to the southern portions of Scions Sound to the Talenta Plains. Later in the war, as relations with Breland deteriorated, operations began in Droaam and the Brelish heartland.

The turn of the century also saw the first of a series of sharp battles between irregulars sponsored by Aundair and Breland in the southern Eldeen Reaches. Little more than well-armed bandits, these proxies engaged in some of the nastiest fighting of the war—magical atrocities, guerrilla ambushes, the murder of prisoners of war, and other crimes were all alleged in this sparsely populated backwoods region. Although the events were widely reported, and all knew the powers behind the fighting, both Aundair and Breland officially denied any responsibility.

A few years later, an event that would turn out to be of monumental importance occurred. The elderly and well-loved Keeper Jovor Daran passed away. After an unusual delay before the Flame indicated its will, a controversial choice was proclaimed. The Cardinal Kaith Serrain, an outspoken advocate of Thrane glory and greater church oversight, ascended. More than for his hard-line stands and provocative rhetoric, Keeper Serrain was an odd choice due to his age. At thirty-one, he was far older at ascension than any other Keeper in recent memory. Concerns about the direction of the Church of the Silver Flame soon quieted, however. The new Keeper followed the former Keeper's general policies. Lulled by tempered proclamations, few noticed Keeper Serrain's steadily accelerating personnel changes in the Diet of Cardinals. Thus was laid the groundwork for Thrane's dark days.



The Sky Battle of Daskaran was fought with arrows, spells, and plummeting lance charges. A dragonhawk speared by a Thrane knight rarely recovered.

903

SECOND SIEGE OF ESTON

In early 903, the Thrane and Karrnath navies engaged in a wide-ranging and coordinated offensive against Cyran and Aundairian shipping. Although their losses were heavy, they managed to swing control of Scions Sound to Thalin and Kaius. This allowed a Thrane army to cross over to Cyre and join up with a small but elite Emerald Claw strike force raiding south. Once again ancient Eston was in harm's way.

Concerned about the Thrane masses and the Karrnathi knights, Cyran forces outside the city did little but probe the besiegers. Thrane offered generous terms, but they were rejected, as embittered Karrnath hinted at the necessity of "corpse-tribute" to buy peace.

As they had nearly a decade before, Eston's House of Making-built walls held strong. The armies settled down for a long siege. A buildup of forces and regular assaults by the attackers was nearly matched by midnight sallies of Cyran cavalry that destroyed dozens of siege towers and engines.

The siege ended in 905, primarily as a result of two events. First, Karrnath's yet unvanquished plague spread to Thrane, undermining that nation's means and will to fight. Second, the defenders were reinforced, yet again, by deadly Wrogar and his elite Aundairian rangers. The rangers arrived one day before dawn and unleashed a barrage of summonings that panicked the Thrane levies and unsettled the Karrnathi elite. The Karrns quickly regained their bearings but could do little but stage a fighting retreat to cover the Thrane soldiers' lack of discipline.

Wrogar's diversion of troops to relieve the siege of Eston proved costly in the north. The Aundairian forces in Karrnath were unable to hold back a resurgence of Karrnathi resistance, including a sustained campaign of terror and guerrilla warfare orchestrated by the Order of the Emerald Claw. Over the course of three months, Aundair was beaten back almost to Rekkenmark.

Karrnath took advantage of Cyre's attention at Eston to march a column of knights and military engineers, supplemented by undead soldiers, southeast of Karrlakton. The troops established two separate armed camps and began building fortifications. Fort Zombie (converted from a lightly fortified keep called Mishann's Redoubt) and Fort Bones were designed as staging points for future Karrnathi operations in the area.

906–913

CYRE EMBATTLED

A stalwart ally is dear as mithral, but should not occasion a lack of vigilance.

—Analects of War by Karrn the Conqueror

In 906, over a decade after hostilities began, Breland roused itself enough to launch a major push into Cyre, striking through Marguul Pass and heading for Saerun and Making. The onset of winter, however, all but closed the pass with rain and snow, halting the flow of supplies to the advance elements. The invasion bogged down.

Nearly all of Cyre's mustered troops were fighting along the Karrnathi border and guarding against Thrane invasion in the west. Breland's push added urgency to Queen Mishann's long-standing negotiations with Valaes Tairn, and soon thousands of elf mercenaries came to fight for Cyre.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

—Eldeen Reaches wardens hire the PCs to combat depredations by increasingly well-armed bandits. Discovery and destruction of marauders' supply sources is highly recommended.

—Trapped in Eston by the besieging Thranes and Karrns, the characters are instructed to sneak through the encircling troops and engage in an extended behind-the-lines harassment campaign.

As they would at various times throughout the war, these deadly warriors harassed their enemies with stealthy guerrilla tactics. Over the next two years, the Brelish found their presence in Cyre too costly, and they withdrew in 908.

Although it was the only nation to contract directly with the elves, Cyre held no monopoly on these elite mercenaries. Fearing an end run around its services, House Deneith quickly stepped in and brokered arrangements between nonaligned elf warbands and several countries. Some warclans even dispensed with pay altogether, choosing to roam Khorvaire independently, seeking glorious battle against any foe.

In 908, Queen Mishann was assassinated by the Order of the Emerald Claw. Her son, Brusst, was crowned almost immediately. The heir had already gained valuable experience leading the Prince's Own cavalry regiment, also called the Blues. Cyre's military situation remained stable during the transition of power. Concerned about a war on three fonts, however, King Brusst immediately began making overtures to Breland, paving the way for joint operations against Thrane several years later.

Although it was a relatively minor engagement in 909, the Sky Battle of Daskaran signaled a new dimension to the war. This first aerial battle occurred between 27 Sky Knights of Aundair and 30 Wyvernriders of Thrane. The conflict was watched from the parapets of Daskaran and fought across a vast expanse of sky. Six wyverns and five dragonhawks plummeted to their death, and both sides claimed victory. Because the riders came from aristocrats on both sides, the battle became a symbol of the chivalry and honorable combat lost later in the war.

In 910, another succession occurred. King Kaius II took the throne of Karrnath with the support of the realm's generals, wealthy landholders, and senior priests. The arrival of Kaius II was a surprise to many warlords of the realm, because he was an unknown quantity—few were aware that Kaius I had fathered an heir.

911

BATTLE OF LURCHING TOWER

By 911, King Thalin's troops had been operating freely in much of "Old Breland"—the area southwest of Scions Sound held by Breland before the war. Indeed, by this time he, rather than Queen Wroann, controlled the area. Brelish objections against Thrane's occupation were brushed aside "given the exigencies of war." When Thalin claimed that Cyran forces were raiding north and that he needed to secure Lurching Tower as a staging ground to combat them, Breland hotly disputed that claim. Thrane mustered an army "to strike at the Cyran bandits" but in 911, it moved first south, not east. In the face of this crisis, King Brusst's years of diplomacy bore fruit—Breland accepted Cyre's offer to help defend against the invaders.

The forces of Thrane that crossed the Brey River, christened the Silver Legion, consisted of 2,000 cavalry, 6,000 regular foot, 1,000 heavy pikes, 2,000 levied irregular archers, and 16 bombards and trebuchets. This force was buttressed by two detachments of the Argent Order, an additional 2,000 troops. In all, the forces of Thrane numbered 13,000.

Arriving at Lurching Tower, Thalin's general sought entry as an "allied" force. The Brelish commander refused to yield, and Thrane's forces declared that Cyran sympathizers had corrupted the garrison. They deployed for a series of assaults. The defenders fought bravely and defended their walls well. Still, few survived the two days it took for relief forces to arrive.

Cyre brought forth three major bodies of troops: 2,000 elf mercenaries, 1,500 dragoons, and more than 4,000 light footmen, all of which arrived by lightning rail at Starilaskur. Brelish troops amounted to 2,000 heavy horse, 500 dragoons, 1,400 light archers and 1,200 foot of the Starilaskur garrison, and 400 mercenary crossbowmen. They were backed by the First Metrol Wands, an elite spellcasting unit. In total, Cyre and Breland mustered more than 14,000 troops.

Although the combined Cyran–Brelish army outnumbered the forces of Thrane, it suffered from having two coequal commanders, Field Marshal Tarrah for the Cyrans and General Alida on the Brelish side. The two agreed on little, and the army suffered for their pride.

The Brelish commander wanted to engage the enemy immediately, and pushed for a heavy cavalry charge at first light. The more casualty-conscious Field Marshal Tarrah preferred maneuver, taking advantage of the superior Cyran and Brelish arcanists and archers. He proposed a softening up through bombardment, targeted at the Thrane front lines of foot and archers. In the end, no joint plan of action was devised.

At first, it didn't seem to matter. The Brelish charge threw the Thrane lines into confusion. Combined with a supporting Cyran barrage, the magebred-mounted knights achieved a breakthrough, which the infantry exploited. The battle was almost won for the southern kingdoms when, heedless of their own lives, the soldiers of the Argent Order fought into range of the First Metrol Wands and decimated them. The Brelish left flank began to collapse, but the discipline and quick thinking of the Cyran dragoons kept it from being a rout. Heavily mauled, both sides withdrew to their original positions before sunset.

Under the cover of night, Thrane slipped the remaining 1,000 Argent Order veterans into the small Arresh Woods. In the morning, as the forces clashed, the Argent Order struck the Cyran left flank and sent it reeling. Despite heroic efforts by Field Marshal Tarrah, the fury of the Aerenal mercenaries, and the remaining First Metrol Wands, the flanking maneuver could not be stopped. The Brelish and Cyran lack of coordination hurt as well; each commander expected the other to throw reserves at the problem. By sunset, more than 1,600 Brelish and 650 Cyrans were dead or captured.

The Cyran and Brelish forces retreated during the second night in good order, though their numbers had been reduced by a third. The next morning, Thrane secured Lurching Tower, threatening to expand its reach ever deeper into Breland.

912–914

SIEGES, FORTRESSES, AND HOLDS

After the Battle of Lurching Tower, fighting quieted for a short time. Breland's shift to support Cyre signaled a new phase of the war. Today's ally could quickly become tomorrow's foe. Intelligence and diplomatic efforts could not be ignored, and had to be targeted at both ally and enemy.

Cyre moved next. The army beaten back from Lurching Tower was reinforced and, eager to avenge that loss, advanced against Arythawn Keep, surrounding it in 912.

Thrane's navy still ruled Scions Sound, however—it moved upriver and used its position on the Brey to destroy the Cyran camp and its supply depots. Once again, Cyre was forced to withdraw.

In the same summer, the first of the mobile fortresses being developed in Breland entered the fray. The massive floating structure Chydris scored a decisive victory against Thrane in the Second Battle of Lurching Tower in that year, helping to drive Thalin's forces north.

In 913, Cyre once again lost its monarch to assassination. Although no pronouncements were made this time, it was widely believed that the Order of the Emerald Claw had struck anew. King Connos ascended to the throne, but the transition did not go smoothly.

Taking advantage of Cyre's succession woes, Thrane levies and Karrnathi knights pushed from opposite sides, converging once again on Eston. The Karrns, perhaps mindful of Thrane's abandonment of the first Eston siege, felt no remorse when they were recalled mid-campaign to repel a renewed Aundairian invasion. During the confusion of the Karrnathi withdrawal, Aerenal mercenaries surged from the fortress and won the day for Cyre, driving King Thalin's armies back to Aruldusk in full retreat.

The Aundairian invasion that kept Eston in Cyran hands was a large one, supported by soarwood supply barges, dragonhawk scouts, and a significant number of arcane companies. Despite Kaius II's recall of his armies from northern Cyre to thwart this invasion, Aundairian armies gained considerable ground.

In a preview of things to come, the Mror Holds declared itself a sovereign state at the first Iron Council in early 914. The clan lords correctly reasoned that no one was in a position to enforce Galifar's claim to the area, particularly not hard-pressed Karrnath. Still, the dwarf lords were no fools—the Karrns were their best customers for weapons, armor, and other materiel. Mror quickly reassured Kaius II that it intended to maintain close military ties. As a result, munitions trade and other business between the two areas continued. Not content with Karrnathi gold, however, the Mror Holds clandestinely engaged Lhazaarite merchants to ship goods south to Cyre and Breland. War profiteering made all the dwarf lords extremely rich in the decades that followed.

At this point, it is instructive to address one of the most frequent question posed by my students. How could the Five Nations have sustained their war efforts over the course of decades without collapsing?

First, the war was not an entirely continuous affair. For the most part, each winter signaled a cessation of large-scale hostilities. Furthermore, the spring planting and autumn harvesting times were generally kept sacrosanct. As Karrnath's early years showed in vivid detail, harvest failure could decimate a nation. Also, major military operations did not occur in all areas every year. A pause of a year or more was usually sufficient to replace casualties and lost materiel, and to restore morale.

Second, the usual historical concentration on significant battles, momentous events, and war innovations concerns only a small portion of the entirety of the Five Nations. A campaign or series of battles that consumes thousands of lives is tragic and morale-sapping, but it is not a precursor to complete collapse. Population levels among the central nations dropped slightly during the war years, but until 994, still hovered in the area of 15 million souls. The loss of well over 1 million Cyrans in the Mourning shook the other nations so severely that they agreed to cease hostilities. Still, even that horrific loss did not unravel the fabric of civilization.

Finally, the Last War showed that the peoples of the Five Nations are a hardy and resilient lot. The passage of centuries has not caused the children of Lhazaar to lose their daring, bravery, toughness, and yes, even their stubbornness. Against tremendous odds they persevered, refusing to let personal loss, agony, or deprivation sway them. That such positive traits should be the basis for a century of bloodshed is perhaps the greatest tragedy of this time.

914–930

Convulsions of the Silver Flame

Wyvern's tail and lance
Defend our holy land
Wings and feathers dance
At the Cardinals' command.

—Popular song in Flamekeep

In 914, after a reign of nearly thirty years, King Thalin of Thrane died of old age. Even before his death, the Diet of Cardinals, now dominated by Speaker Serrain and his supporters, had been vocal in its concerns about his weak son taking the throne. In eulogies and memorials after the king's death, the church first broke its silence about Thalin's Vision, claiming the event was both legitimate and misunderstood. Keeper Serrain himself spoke of the vision, describing "the silver flame that will reach from ocean to ocean, to build a kingdom of the righteous." The Keeper's confirmation of the previously unsanctified prophecy spread throughout the land like a brushfire, and the results were cataclysmic.

Although everyone heard the same words of the Keeper, the vision was interpreted differently by each group. Only one thing was certain: The faith of the Silver Flame was embraced everywhere as the highest ideal of the nation. Even the church was shocked by the fervor and zealotry unleashed by the Keeper's announcement, as if the fire in the hearts of the citizenry had been quenched for too long. Far from muttering and making do as war threatened on

Adventure Seeds

—A darkly cloaked figure with a Brelish accent hires the characters to "scout" the countryside of Old Breland and work toward "constraining" Thrane's authority. The PCs must be careful and subtle, as much diplomatic as forceful. All-out conflict will engender reprisals against the common citizenry. Still, the Thrane hegemony cannot be ignored.

—A prized Karrnathi general has been coordinating the provision of dwarven materiel to the soldiers of his country. A prideful and stubborn military man, he reacted poorly to the Mror declaration. The party has been ordered to escort him back to Karrnath alive, while avoiding or curtailing any diplomatic incidents with the touchy dwarves.

every border, the people of Thrane now demanded action, and they found leaders among the most militaristic paladins, mystics, and religious demagogues.

The people revolted openly against Prince Daslin ir'Wynarn, and tens of thousands barred his entry into Flamekeep for coronation at his ancestral palace. The mobs demanded that the Keeper lead them, and that the Diet of Cardinals ensure a pure life for Thrane citizenry by assuming legislative control. After stalling for a couple months "to explore options," the church hierarchy accepted the people's mandate. In truth, the church appeared paralyzed by the events, and it was several years before it acted in any meaningful or coordinated way.

As militant sects and orders sprang up, each strove to outdo its competitors. By 915, almost any stripe of radicalism and zealotry was accepted as normal. Calling a neighbor "impious" could lead to that person's death sentence. The Pure Land movement murdered foreigners in the streets, the Order of the Pure became a wandering carnival of excessive piety, and the Fire of Tribulation sect sought to cleanse "speech, deed, and thought itself." Not all the cults of what came to be called the Righteous Kingdom were violent, but the more extreme militias, whether sincere or charlatans, were the ones who exerted the greatest influence.

A few nobles, priests, and commoners did resist the tide, but they had no one to rally behind. The prince was meek in nature and went into private life quietly. While the cities and villages burned and riots ran rampant, ir'Wynarn did nothing.

By the end of 915, it was clear that the vision of a cleansing silver fire burned only within Thrane's borders. Calls to defend the young theocracy from its enemies rose in urgency and strength. Tens of thousands answered, vowing to defend Mother Church. The new rabble-rousers had only to point, and tell them where to march. In the spring of 916, massed troops stood ready, rising each morning to sing in joyous prayer.

Casting about for the worst of the unbelievers, the mobs focused on the Aundair-occupied west. Their fervor unmatched, the newly expanded Silver Legion and the newly created Pure Legion formed a peasant army thousands strong. The first military engagement of the new Thrane was to be at the Battle of the Silver Banners. In the end, religious zeal and commanders known for little but fiery oratory could not stand against veteran soldiers and competent generals—in a series of sharp, clever flanking fights, a smaller Aundairian force routed the Thranes. Captured banners were hung upside-down in the Aundairian capital and subjected to considerable mockery. The legions retreated to Morningcrest, bloodied but unbowed.

Over the next fall and winter, the mass denunciations against internal enemies slowed as the Keeper and the Diet of Cardinals finally began to reassert some semblance of control over the population. For the first time, the Keeper seemed to be truly embracing the power forced upon him. A growing number of members of the Council of Cardinals, including the now majority hard-liners in the Diet, publicly supported the tenor, if not all the means, of the mob fervor.

By late summer 917, ominous statements about Breland began circulating among the powerful in Flamekeep. The most volatile religious leaders considered all the nations around Thrane to be faithless, but Breland was deemed particularly blasphemous. That nation's disloyalty in siding with Cyre against Thrane before the Battle of Lurching Tower showed the Brelish lack of character. The people of Thrane's steadfast tolerance of different faiths and viewpoints blinded them to the one truth of Thalin's Vision and the Keeper's leadership.

Early in the winter, Breland formally complained that Thrane's conscript navy impinged on personal liberties, that the forced conversions in the borderlands around Sigilstar failed to respect private faith and belief, and that mandatory tithing in the Lessyk area of Old Breland violated Brelish law. The Diet of Cardinals denounced Brelish "interference in Thrane's internal affairs" and strenuously objected when a group of overzealous Pure Land missionaries was turned away at the Brelish border.

In 918, a "spontaneous" and enthusiastic Southern Crusade milled about in the lands of Old Breland, ridding the land of Brelish "sympathizers" and fully securing it as part of Thrane. Still, Breland refused to be drawn in. With little direction, and even less meaningful leadership, the peasant army ran out of steam and wandered home for the harvest. No pitched battle occurred, but the Keeper and the Diet did learn valuable lessons about controlling and directing mob-armies.

In that same year, saboteurs destroyed the Glass Tower of Sharn. Breland suspected Thrane or Aundairian involvement; Thrane blamed Cyre and Karrnath provocateurs. With spying and conspiracies so rampant, each week brought new rumors about the responsible parties. The anger of the Brelish people could find no specific outlet, and the government of ailing Queen Wroann could not muster the necessary focus to identify one. As a result, no major offensive was launched in response. The primary impact of the tragedy was a reinforcement of Brelish suspicions and isolation.

The upheaval in Thrane caused a profound rift in the national branches of the Church of the Silver Flame. Although the church was never overly popular in Karrnath, worshipers could be found in large numbers in Breland, Cyre, and Aundair. Cardinals outside Thrane, mindful of the nationalistic bent to the new fervor and seemingly abandoned by the Keeper and the Diet, rushed to proclaim their home loyalty and decry the upheaval. Suddenly suspect Silver Flame followers throughout Khorvaire worked diligently to separate themselves from the events in Thrane. Brelish tolerance and Cyran appreciation for spiritual matters allowed most of the church faithful to avoid persecution, as long as they left no doubt as to their nationalism. The fallout was far worse in Aundair, where King Wrogar ordered Fairhaven's Cathedral of the Silver Flame closed.

919

BATTLE OF BREY RIVER

In early 919, Keeper Serrain spoke to an enraptured crowd in Flamekeep. His vague exhortations concerning a "flame sweeping across nations" were, once again, not widely divergent from long-standing Silver Flame dogma. In the context of the Righteous Kingdom, however, they were more than enough to inspire a fresh crusade.

By the time it arrived at the Brey River in midsummer, the Pure Legion was more mob than army, but its numbers were daunting. Roughly 29,000 levies and peasant volunteers, many of them child soldiers, were supported by 3,000 Thrane regulars, 4,000 militant priests of the Argent Order, 3,000 irregular archers, and 1,000 light cavalry. They were met at the Lower Ford of the Brey River, within a day's march of Vathirond, not by the city's nominative owner Breland, but by a force of roughly 12,000 well-prepared Cyran troops. Cyre fielded 3,000 veteran archers, 1,500 noble cavalry, 2,500 levy light foot, 2,000 regulars, 2,200 Valenar foot mercenaries, and 800 battlecasters from the First and Second Metrol Wands.

At first, the trained and professional Cyran troops made the river crossing a slaughter for the green levies of Thrane. They held the ford on the first day of the battle, and during the night.

At that point, an army of Brelish arrived in the west. Wary of each of the forces arrayed—the massed Silver Flame faithful as well as the Cyran enemies from Marguul Pass—the Brelish troops took up defensive positions. They sent riders to each side informing them that their orders were to keep the combatants from moving toward the Brelish heartland. This inactivity sat poorly with Breland's hired goblin marauders, but the battle's second bloody day passed without movement by Breland. Thrane's troops continued to suffer significant losses, but their assaults wore at Cyran numbers and morale. Were it not for the ferocious elves who appeared to move about the battlefield unhindered, the Cyran position would have been far worse at day's end.

Thrane and Cyre clashed again on the third day, but by this time the Brelish goblins had had enough. They broke ranks and rushed the nearest combatant. As it turned out, they slammed into the Cyran left flank. Assuming that Breland had finally decided to back Thrane, the Cyran army's strained morale failed, and it fled east.

In three days, thousands died. Bodies washed downstream for miles, with fishermen in Scions Sound and Eston catching corpses in their nets days and even weeks later. The Battle of Brey River was easily the bloodiest battle of the first thirty years of the war.

With the withdrawal of its enemies, the now bloodthirsty Pure Legion turned east. The mob looted and pillaged western Cyre for two weeks before being driven back to Vathirond by the arrival of Cyran heavy cavalry and heavy foot. Although tempted to strike north and free their prior territories beyond Castle Rhonewatch, the Brelish forces received no new orders and thus pulled back to more defensible positions near Lurching Tower.

Toward the end of 919, Queen Wroann finally succumbed to old age. Her reign had been a long and prosperous one, but now King Kason ascended to the throne. The new king echoed the sentiments of many when he cautioned against too great involvement in "foreign entanglements."

In 920, a Thrane army, now fully backed by the church, moved against Aundair in the grasslands east of Ghalt. The Aundairian troops, supported by the country's guardian towers, were too skilled and too entrenched; the Thranes made little headway. For Aundair, a draw was as good as a victory—it continued to hold land that Thrane once claimed as its own.

That same year, the indomitable King Wrogar of Aundair died while hunting in the Eldeen Reaches. Foul play was suspected but never proven. He was succeeded the following year by his daughter, Queen Wrella. Although the transition was smooth, Aundair had lost a furious warrior, a brilliant commander, and one of its only monarchs who cultivated deep and personal ties in the Reaches.

Aundair irregulars were used southeast of the Blackcaps and pushed toward the small Thrane garrison in Erlaskar. Thrane's troops at Drum Keep were besieged in 922. Aundair did not have the resources or troop strength to take the stronghold, and Thrane could do little more than bring in limited amounts of supplies through the mountainous terrain. As a result, this stalemated position remained for fourteen years. Displaying its usual complacency, the only reaction of Breland to the hostilities along its northern border was to hire auxiliaries to harass both sides.

922

DEATH OF ROYALS

In 922, Queen Wrella of Aundair's betrothal and marriage to Deggan of Cyre (younger brother to King Connos) was announced to great acclaim in both lands. A year later, she gave birth to an heir. These glad tidings soon turned tragic. The queen's floating coach was surprised by a flight of Thrane wyvernriders ranging deep into Aundair. The Thrane force suffered heavy casualties but scattered the escort dragonhawks and assaulted the royal procesion. Both Queen Wrella and Deggan of Cyre perished. Since the newborn Crown Prince Aarott was too young to rule, Lord Marlex was proclaimed regent.

Even darker circumstances claimed the life of Breland's monarch. Anxious to avoid further commitment of Brelish troops, King Kason stepped up previously tentative efforts to bring a demon regiment from Shavarath to fight on his behalf. During one particularly intense negotiation session with a marilith, the demon broke free and consumed the king and three of his closest advisors before returning to her home plane. Five months later, in late 922, Regent Brask was finally able to consolidate power. He then released details of the former king's folly. Intended to quash the few remaining internal calls for outside help, and as a warning against any other realms that might be thinking along the same lines, the announcement extinguished any possibility of reconciliation between Breland and Thrane. Accusations of diabolism and prophecies of Brelish doom spilled from the Keeper and the Cardinals in a steady flow.

In 923, the Thrane denunciations against Breland reached a fever pitch. The Pure Legion and the Legion of Perpetual Adoration gathered in southwestern Thrane and marched south. Brelish Rangers spotted them early, and the regent gathered the Great Army of Wroat to oppose the invasion.

The Battle of the Greenhaunt, as it was later known, was fought in the forests between Cragwar and Sword Keep, with enormous numbers of dead, mostly Thrane levies, being left unburied among the trees. Still, it was less Thrane's superior numbers than Brelish hesitancy and lack of commitment that carried the day. Even decades into the war, Breland proved it was not willing to sustain an all-out war effort, or suffer large numbers of casualties.

Emboldened by their victory in the Battle of the Greenhaunt, the Thrane legions turned against Breland with full force in high summer, almost cutting the country in half. In desperation, Regent Brask convinced the gnomes to march north and contracted with House Deneith for greater numbers of goblin mercenaries to support them. The looming Thrane threat brought about the first full-scale stirring of the sleeping bear. New volunteers and fresh materiel began flooding north. This fresh resolve blunted Thrane's southern movement—the Brelish rallied and advanced from Wroat in the west and Starilaskur in the east. Threatened with encirclement, the Thranes pulled back and set up defensive formations north of Hatheril.

In 924 and 925, the fighting faltered as all the combatants paused to regroup. Raids against neighbors were minimal, and no major invasions of territory were launched. Then, harvests failed in Breland and Cyre, and their armies turned to seizing food supplies. Thrane rejoiced, and the Keeper hinted that a divine hand was acting against her enemies. But the harvests were poor elsewhere as well—too few hands worked the fields, and too many raids had burned farmsteads. After almost thirty years of war, banditry ran rampant in most of old Galifar.

925–930

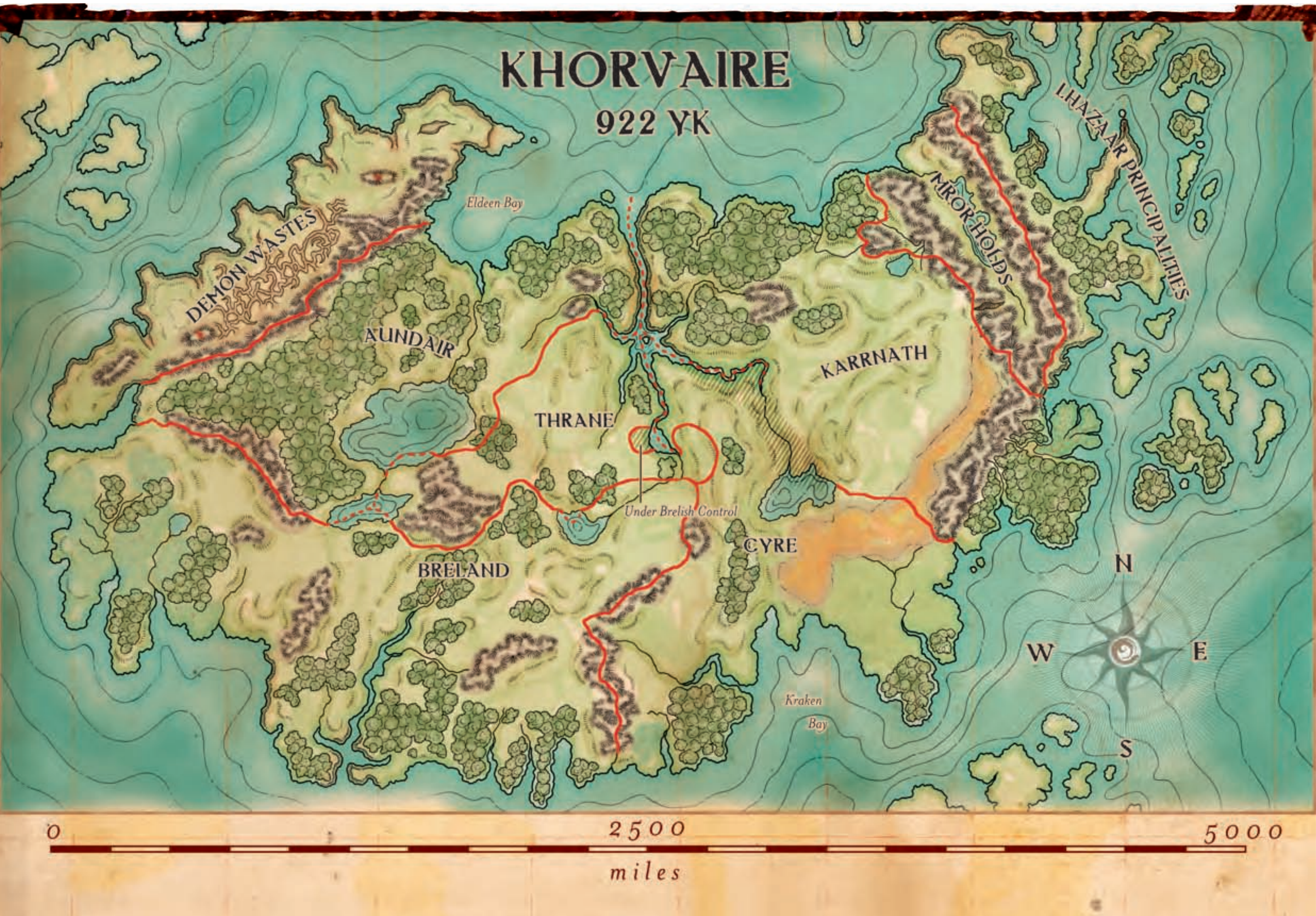
ANGUISH IN OCCUPIED THALIOST

Aundair's Regent Marlex, securely in power now, concocted a bold scheme in late 925. Troops would be stripped from the static Karrnathi campaign, including the garrisons over the key supply line across Scions Sound, in order to reinforce the two towers operating in western Thrane. A major push in the area of Ghalt would cut off the southern half of Thrane and force the church to sue for peace. Even if the operation was not a major success, Thrane forces would be pushed that much farther from Fairhaven and would be unable to conduct serious operations elsewhere. Unfortunately for Aundair, a deep-cover devotee of the Flame was embedded in its command staff. At great personal risk, he leaked the plans to his priest, who passed them along to his superiors.

Taking advantage of their superior intelligence, the Cardinals gathered another army of faithful, this time at Flamekeep. When Aundair stepped up raids in the Lathleer region in early 926, the Cardinals exercised a previously unknown level of control over their mob-armies by sending advance elements west as misdirection. Suddenly, the commanders gave a surprise order, and the newly proclaimed Northern Crusade wheeled and arrived in Daskaran before word could spread. Aundair was caught in mid-plan; the bulk of its reserve forces were in western Thrane. The Northern Crusade surged across the Aundair River and quickly seized ancient Thaliost. Aundair's skeleton army in the east fought courageously but was simply overwhelmed.

Conducting swift and thorough operations that had obviously been planned previously, Thrane soldiers stormed into the homes of Thaliost's most prominent citizens. Those citizens were given a choice: Swear loyalty to Thrane or die. Given their renowned pragmatic nature, many capitulated. Still, more than a few of the city's elite were steadfast in their loyalty to Aundair and thus were put to the sword. In very short order, Thrane seized control of the city's government. The conquering army's leaders, perhaps too focused on securing Thrane rule, turned a blind eye when fanatic soldiers engaged in widespread sword-point conversions.

The response in Aundair was bitter. When rumors spread that a Silver Flame spy had betrayed the country, citizens sacked Silver Flame temples and facilities and even lynched the high priest in Fairhaven. The remaining Silver Flame adherents in Aundair renounced their faith, abandoned overt trappings of their worship, proclaimed their loyalty, or denounced the Council of Cardinals—in sum, did whatever was necessary to survive the purge. These crimes and reactions enraged Thrane's leaders and soldiers.



In the spiraling retaliation, Thrane did not lose sight of its military position. The army entrenched in depth along the new border with Aundair, guarding all land approaches to Thaliost. Aundair was forced to conduct risky crossings of Scions Sound to bring supplies to its forces that remained entrenched in Karrnath.

Aundair poured its rage into its originally planned assault, striking east from Ghalt. The Thrane forces slowed the Aundairian advance and even repelled an opportunistic Brelish raid near Cragwar. At midsummer, Aundair and Thrane met for the second battle at the Crying Fields. This time, the forces of Aundair decisively defeated the outnumbered Thrane troops and seized significant territory. The Thrane armies withdrew.

Despite these setbacks, Thrane retained and tightened its grip on conquered Thaliost and the surrounding lands. Members of the Northern Crusade seized houses and property abandoned by Thaliost refugees or those "cleansed by sword." The ancient royal palace was remade into Cardinal Sudro's home, after he was appointed governor of Thrane's newest province.

The Aundairians did not give up. In 927, the Grand Army of Liberation marched into the Silver Wood and surged toward Thaliost. This was Aundair's most desperate attempt to retake its pre-Galifar capital, but despite the work of sky knights, the Knights Arcane and their knight phantoms, the Fairhaven and Stormhome Wands, and other elite units, it failed. The army was stopped and then pushed back that autumn by the tenacity of Thrane's soldiers. Unlike Thrane, Aundair lacked the numbers to fight a two-front war, both in Thaliost and near Ghalt.

In the end, the Aundairians were forced into a harsh retreat toward Kerkulin, beginning what came to be known as the Shameful March. Humbled by the Thranes, the Aundairians looted food and livestock as they left—robbing from fellow Aundairians to deny aid to the enemy. The depleted Grand Army of Liberation set up defensive positions along the northern coast with heavy hearts.

In high summer of 928, emboldened by Aundair's action the prior year and led to believe that magical support might arrive to strengthen their hand, the commoners of Thaliost revolted. The soldiers of Thrane moved to suppress the revolt, but the Diet of Cardinals demanded softer methods be applied first: They decreed that no food would be supplied to the city until the rebels surrendered. The Cardinals misjudged the commoners, who found ways to smuggle food and supplies into the city and resisted the siege.

When the "gentler hand" failed, the Diet unleashed the knights. The city was pacified, show trials were held, and the captured instigators were burned alive as an example. Thrane–Thaliost attitudes, unpleasant previously, became even more bitter. A large garrison called the Flame's Anointed was assigned to the city from 928 forward, and relations between the city's people and its occupiers remain tainted even years after the war's end.

Thrane's actions in Thaliost mark the darkest point in Keeper Serrain's reign. It cannot be questioned that the Church of the Silver Flame was in complete control of the Northern Crusade, and that all the measures taken to pacify Thaliost were approved by the Diet of Cardinals. Although the lycanthropic crusade has long been a warning of the potential for Silver Flame excesses, Thaliost is truly the most "evil" of church-sponsored activities.

Given the fervor of the nation at the time, it could be argued that the church rulers had little choice when faced with intractable opposition, but that is a circular claim. After all, the mood of Thrane was in no small part a product of the Keeper's and the Cardinals' exhortations. Some have described the Keeper as a weak individual overwhelmed by the passions of his time. Others point to his preascension writings and deem all Thrane's actions to be part of his long-term plans. Certain Silver Flame commentators have suggested that the long-denied Voice of Darkness in the Flame was responsible. Whatever the cause of this tragic chapter of history, many in the Church of the Silver Flame have spent the last three-quarters of a century seeking redemption. Given all the good the church has created and all the true evil it has vanquished over the years, we can only hope young Keeper Daran continues the virtuous path she has laid before the faithful.

Also in 928, saboteurs used powerful magical fire to destroy the White Arch Bridge, severing the lightning rail link between Thaliost and Rekkenmark. No concrete evidence has been unearthed proving whether the attack was motivated by Thrane trying to secure Thaliost from Aundairian forces to the east, by Aundair fearful of further Thrane advances, or even by Karrnath seeking to isolate Aundair forces in its territory. Regardless, neither of the three countries had sufficient magical resources or control of the surrounding region to implement reconstruction. From that day forward, the bridge remained a ruin.

That same year, Ven ir'Kesslan led four thousand settlers on an arduous voyage along the coast to southeastern Khorvaire to birth the nation of Q'barra. Many died of disease, hunger, and pirate attack during the journey and in settling the jungle, but the small nation stabilized and became a beacon for those fleeing what the Q'barrans called "the Western War." As the war continued to rage, the people of Q'barra took no real notice of political or military changes west of the mountains; for them, it was all "the civil war in central Galifar." Even after the war, their language and attitudes remained stuck in an older time, even as their culture and towns grew to resemble those of Valenar humans and the Lhazaar Principalities, their primary trading partners.

Many question King Connos's approval of ir'Kesslan's mission and his grant of the Q'barran lands. Why would Cyre, pressed by decades of war, allow thousands to abandon it?

First, the majority of the settlers were steadfast objectors to the war, believing that no Galifarian should raise arms against another. They were more a burden on Cyre than a boon. Still, the king could have forced their support. Second, the land grant involved territories that until recently had been claimed by Karrnath. No doubt Connos hoped to distract and insult his northern foe. Most important in my view, however, Connos was a true child of Cyre—and thus, Cyran appreciation was his lifeblood. Ir'Kesslan was an accomplished diplomat, and he appealed to the "poetry in his Majesty's soul." King Connos was touched by ir'Kesslan's vision and could not deny his request, despite its complete lack of strategic benefit for Cyre. Although the final chapter of the New Galifar project in the jungles of Q'barra has yet to be written, its beginning was a hope-dappled marriage of brilliant negotiation and a war-weary heart.

Finally, the eventful year of 928 brought a new royal to power in Breland. King Boranex was crowned that year, although he had effectively assumed power from Regent Brask when he came of age in 927. His first full year of power would begin in massacre.

In 929, the Silver Legion of Thrane, an outfit known for toughness and grit, stepped up its efforts to secure the lands between Lake Brey and the Blackcaps. Ranging south to Hatheril, one company encountered stiff resistance. Claiming to follow the "doctrine of Thaliost," the soldiers massacred half the inhabitants as "unbelievers" and forced mass conversion on the survivors. Outrage ran the length of Breland and beyond. Once again, the worst stereotypes of the Silver Flame fanatics were confirmed. Citing this event, the gnomes of Zilargo moved even closer to their western neighbor, sending permanent detachments to train with Brelish wands and scouts.

The mounting atrocities compelled a group of Thrane's Cardinals to warn against "excesses of zealotry." It seemed that not all of Thrane's priesthood agreed with the Keeper's and the Diet's approach. Recriminations began to fly in Flamekeep as hard-liners railed against those who would subvert Thrane's holy cause. Keeper Serrain ceased making public appearances, and rumors flew that he was ailing (he would be seen little during the remaining years of his reign). Although the path would not be smooth or swift, these tidings are the first evidence that the church's elders were stepping away from the abyss.

The Diet issued Breland a formal apology; it even cast from the church and imprisoned the officer-priests of the Silver Legion company that destroyed Hateril (they were reinstated to command when passions ran high once again). The Cardinals then sent a delegation to Wroat to offer a cessation of hostilities. In 930, a ceasefire was signed between Thrane and Breland. Thrane voluntarily pulled back north of Cragwar and Sword Keep, and Breland assumed control of a border anchored by those strongholds. For Thrane, this retreat allowed the church to concentrate on quashing any hint of civil war, and to focus attention on its many other enemies.

928–936

CYRE IN THE BALANCE

Morale among the soldiers and citizenry—one's own and one's enemies—is paramount. Be mindful that in serving it internally, a commander not bolster the foe disproportionately.

—Analects of War by Karrn the Conqueror

Given the assassination of his grandmother and his father by the Emerald Claw, King Connos's hatred of Karrnath was absolute. Cyran forces had pushed the Karrnathi troops north and east, away from the border, but those hostilities were far from over. Given Breland's ceasefire with Thrane, Cyre became concerned that the Cardinals would move east. Finally, although Cyre had a working relationship with Breland, the events of recent years showed that no alliance was truly solid. King Connos decided that it was time to go on the offensive.

929

BATTLE OF METROL

In 929, King Connos gathered an army of cavalry regiments and deadly Valenar mounted scouts in the area south of Lake Cyre. They were ordered to strike the previously Karrnathi-held regions of Talenta, annexing the lands and establishing a trade route to the Mror Holds, the Principalities, and Q'barra. Ultimately, the First Battle of the Plains of Talenta was lost through a combination of Cyran overconfidence and halfling unity. The Cyrans expected to take the tribes apart one by one, but instead they found themselves facing an army as large as their own—and with better knowledge of the terrain. The halflings and their dinosaurs beat back the cavalry.

Emerald Claw spies made sure that news of Cyre's failed Talenta campaign soon reached the court in Korth. Cyre's armies in the northern lines were stretched thin, and many troops had been taken out of the Metrol garrison to support Connos's strike east.

The next year, Karrnath was in a perfect position to take advantage of Cyre's setback. Aundair's eastern army had been quiet since its main supply line over the White Arch Bridge had been cut. King Kaius II's years of rebuilding and marshaling of forces bore fruit. He gathered a powerful army at Vedykar and moved it quickly by lightning rail south of Fort Zombie. The troops were ably commanded by General Kron, Kaius's distant cousin, who had previously been lauded for his masterful use of undead, the terrain, and defensive tactics during the Aundairian invasion. Kron was eager for an chance to display his offensive command skills.

The order of battle included 2,000 dragoons, 1,500 heavy cavalry, 2,500 irregular archers from the Karrnwood, 4,000 crossbowmen, 13,000 light foot, 4,000 pike, and 12,000 undead, including the First and Second Atur Legions. Most important, though, were two mercenary engineering regiments from the Mror Holds, who came equipped with bombards, towers, and trebuchets. All told, more than 39,000 troops set out from eastern Karrnath, the largest army the country had ever assembled.

"Lord Kron's Expedition," as it came to be known, quick-marched the miles south and west to threaten Metrol. In a masterful stroke, Kron had the dwarf engineers fashion a group of large rafts, which the regiments used to cross Lake Cyre at several points along the way, enabling multiple prongs of attack against Cyre. One detachment was ordered south to intercept any reinforcements.

Given the lack of Karrnathi military activity in the east, Cyre had not concentrated its defenses in the area. So quick and secret was Karrnath's advance that the

ADVENTURE SEEDS

—The PCs are members of Prince Daslin ir'Wynarn's personal guard. While escorting the new monarch to Flamekeep, they notice a lack of cheering citizens. Things are far worse in the city when they reach the royal castle and the mob bars the way. The PCs must keep the prince safe as he navigates his way out of the city. Once their leader decides not to lead his nation into civil war, they are also tasked with ensuring that discussions with the church about the transition of power go smoothly.

—Ven ir'Kesslan hires the PCs to help protect the settlers on the long voyage to their new home in Q'barra. The party must face deadly storms, blood-thirsty pirates, fearsome monsters, internal dissension, and possibly Karrnathi retaliation.

Home Guard of Cyre, 5,000 of the nation's best heavy infantry, supported by 1,000 engineers and artillerists, had only a couple days to prepare. In that time, the nobles and gentry of Cyre quickly raised 2,000 light horse and a levy force of 8,000 Metrol's citizens. The defenders were determined to hold their country's capital.

A last-minute arrival by lightning rail of 4,000 troops from the west, including a few hard-bitten veterans of the Eston sieges, bolstered the city's morale as the smoke from the Karrnathi pillage began to appear on the horizon. Despite all this, the Karrnathi had far greater numbers, and half the Cyran army was raw recruits, untested in battle.

Despite the bravery of the troops, the citizenry succumbed to panic, and chaos reigned. Refugees poured out, heading west and south.

Shaken by the populace's reaction, the Cyran forces decided not to wait for a siege. The Home Guard marched out and took a position outside the city walls on a low hill, covered by archers and with levies to either side. The cavalry was held in reserve.

Kron's strategy was to encircle and destroy the Cyran position, and he did this by forming most of his columns into two wings. The token force left to hold the center against the Home Guard did a brilliant job of keeping it occupied. Indeed, the Eston troops drove into Kron's forces on the center left, and Cyran General Diran Forgill of Cyre prepared the light horse to exploit what he was sure was a coming breakthrough.

Suddenly, the Karrn plan unfolded. Dragoons and heavy cavalry—all hardened veterans—appeared on the flanks, slicing into the levies. The western troops in the center were abruptly forced into a fighting retreat as the supporting troops on their flank evaporated. Only the Home Guard held its position—and in the end, all 5,000 were either cut down or captured in the dying light of that afternoon.

No serious resistance remained to stop Lord Kron's troops. One quick blast from the Mror bombards at close range destroyed the city gatehouse, and the victorious warriors poured in. The Karrns had borne decades of famine, disease, and ignominious defensive operations. It was time to show the world that Karrnath must be feared. All night, all the next day, and for three more days after that, Metrol was an open city. The screaming never stopped. While Metrol was put to fire and sword, corpse collectors performed their gruesome rounds, and a new Atur Legion rose.

After five days of looting and killing, Lord Kron rallied his forces for a triumphant march back to the Karrnathi heartland. Certainly, little was left of Metrol to occupy. The victorious Karrns burned and pillaged their way along the western back of the Cyre river, leaving a charred path 300 miles long.

In the fall, Kaius II offered harsh terms to Connos, which would have ceded land to Karrnath, renounced the Cyran claim to the crown of Galifar, and imposed yearly tribute. Cyre rejected the offer and began a propaganda campaign, decrying the "martyrdom of Metrol," the "rape of Cyre," and the presence of cannibalistic undead in the streets during the sack.

Although a dismal time for the Cyre military, the aftermath of the sack of Metrol was a triumph for Cyran diplomacy. Cyre played the wronged victim to the hilt. Liaisons with Breland, Thrane, Aundair, and even the Cyran cities to the south and west presented graphic accounts of the Karrns' depredations, particularly their corpse-harvesting. Their performances were masterful and rallied the world to Cyre's side. Karrnathi atrocities during the sack of Metrol, while tragic, might have actually saved Cyre from annihilation. Those acts fully united all of Cyre against Karrnath and gained it great sympathy from the other nations.

930–935

Reaction to the Sack of Metrol

After the slaughter at Metrol, King Boranex severed ties between Breland and Karrnath. In response, Kaius II ordered a series of raids against far western Brelish outposts. Thrane's Diet of Cardinals, whose proclamations concerning its long-time ally had been muted to this point, condemned Kaius II and announced that Thrane would no longer support its northeastern neighbor. The church made it known through back channels that no Silver Flame force would oppose a Cyran retaliation or Aundairian offensive. Confident it would not be distracted by the other nations, and entirely committed to Karrnath's defeat, Cyre marshaled naval and land forces for a fresh campaign in the north.

Meanwhile in Karrnath, the afterglow of the triumph at Metrol quickly turned sour. The victory had muted news of another disastrous harvest, and again starvation stalked the land. Even worse, Lord Kron let his triumph and subsequent promotion to Field Marshal of the Armies go to his head. He began ordering troop movements without consulting the king, and used strongarm tactics to ensure that he and his soldiers were well fed during the winter. His ultimate undoing occurred when he tired of the arrogance of the Order of the Emerald Claw and barred the order from his presence. When the order presented King Kaius II with eyewitness accounts of Kron's plans to declare himself monarch, Kaius was saddened but not surprised. The declaration of Kron's treachery and his assassination (along with that of his senior staff) shortly thereafter devastated the army and significantly weakened Karrnathi war efforts.

For their part, the Cyrans choose to ignore the pillaged lands in the east—an advance there would lead only to the nigh-impregnable bastion at Karrlakton. The avengers pushed north across Scions Sound farther west, an area from which it had been launching raids for years. King Connos led the Cyran assault personally, and the troops fought with avenging fury. The Karrns were able to stage a delaying action against the Cyran advance at Loran Rath, but could do little but fall back slowly. By the end of the summer, Cyre had secured a solid foothold on Karrnathi soil north of the sound.

House Deneith's role in the Last War has been widely discussed. Given the demand for mercenary services, its fortunes soared. Less reported is its role in securing Karrlakton from the ravages of war. Mindful of House Cannith's troubles in Eston, Deneith issued an early proclamation that it would "secure and preserve" its home city. Glad to have Deneith guarding its largest city and anchoring the southeastern reaches of Scions Sound, Karrnath initially supported the decision. Only later, when King Kaius II realized that Deneith truly meant to keep Karrlakon free from any nation's war effort, did he regret his father's inaction. Still, the king wisely choose not to precipitate a possible civil war by attempting to occupy and control the city. No one wished to anger the continent's primary supplier of mercenary troops, or challenge the stout defenses of the Sentinel House's home.

Taking advantage of Karrnath's distractions with internal politics and the avenging Cyran force, Aundairian troops stepped up operations east of Rekkenmark. Though these conflicts were mostly large-scale raids aimed at supplementing the trickle of supplies crossing Scions Sound, they tied down Karrnathi troops that could have reinforced the south.

With the Karrnathi pressed on two sides and internally divided, their toughness once again came to the fore. By slowly falling back and extracting a bloody price for every mile, the Karrns caused both fronts to bog down significantly. Their commanders knew that, in time, Cyran passion would cool and the Aundairian supplies would run out. By mid-autumn the fronts stopped moving, and all sides settled in for the harsh Karrnathi winter. All knew this was a temporary truce and immediately began refitting their armies and rebuilding their fortifications. Even so, the informal ceasefire would last nearly five years.

By 934, Kaius had carefully purged his army of Kron supporters and once again had begun thinking long-term. Although the Aundairian and Cyran presence in his lands was galling, those forces had shown no inclination to move forward. He needed to finally secure his eastern lands. Heavily supported by undead troops and marching largely by night, the Eastern Star Legion met and defeated a semiunited force of halflings in the Second Battle of the Plains of Talenta. Karrnath took a number of valuable chieftains hostage, and in this way secured the good behavior of the northern Talenta tribes. It was a policy that Karrnath continued throughout the war.

Aundair and Thrane, meanwhile, engaged in pitched battles from the Starpeaks to the Crying Fields. Neither of the two mortal enemies could claim victory when the low-intensity siege of Drum Keep was lifted. King Boranex ordered the newly completed fortress Argonth north to secure the Blackcaps. Uncertain whom he meant to battle, and unwilling to face a flying bastion, both Aundair and Thrane retreated. Although the Cardinals objected, in truth Thrane's position in the far west had been untenable since Cragwar had been lost. Aundair reassigned its few "advisors" north and left the area, almost completely, in the hands of hastily commissioned bandit auxiliaries.

936

First Siege of Korth

Along the relatively stable battle lines in the north, 936 saw a large-scale Cyran raid into Karrnath. The timing was good, because the invasion happened while Karrnath's reserves were pushing back Aundair in the north and mopping up the remaining outposts of tribal resistance in the Talenta Plains.

The Cyran raiders discovered a vulnerable point in the Karrnathi lines and surged through. They encountered little resistance, and urgently requested more troops and supplies. Acting nimbly, Cyre's General Brugeff, Supreme Commander of the Northern Front, rushed to exploit the breakthrough. Although the fighting was pitched at times, and Karrnathi troops defended bravely, Cyre was able to make significant progress toward Korth.

Hoping to avoid an extended siege, Cyre immediately assaulted the walls. This attack might have been successful if the plot to open the Southgate—leading straight into the king's palace—had not been uncovered and stymied by the Order of the Emerald Claw. While Korth's heaviest troops, including a detachment of the Conqueror's Host—the king's personal guards—pushed the invaders back, priests of Vol magically barred the gate. Thereafter, General Brugeff contented himself with pillaging the countryside for miles in all directions.

Marines from the privateering town of Westhaven staged a daring voyage down Scions Sound to harry Cyran supply lines. Karrnathi relief forces returning from Talenta and those raised from levies in the countryside countered the besiegers, denying them food from foraging. Finally, King Kaius II stepped out of Kron's besmirched shadow and showed himself to be a powerful military leader, rallying the common folk and personally leading undead legions on night raids against Cyran lines. In the end, Cyre retreated back toward the sound.

Though the siege was lifted, Cyran forces continued to hold parts of southern Karrnathi until late in 940. Karrnath's villages suffered heavily in this period, and dark mutterings about the "alliance of Aundair, Cyre, and Thrane" were common in Korth at the time. In fact, Thrane never actively aided Aundair and Cyre, but by failing to relieve the Karrns in any way, it became a target of popular wrath.

Toward the end of 936, Thrane lost its controversial ruler. After a lingering ailment during which the Keeper reportedly aged prematurely, Kaith Serrain died. In a relatively brief but extraordinarily momentous reign, the Keeper gave full voice to Thrane's territorial ambitious, wrapping them in the mantle of religious mandate. In a last oddity, like so many that characterized his rule, it was months before the Flame spoke about ascension. Not until mid-937 was Keeper Lavira Tagor proclaimed.

From a long-term viewpoint, Keeper Tagor's appointment was one of the most important events of the early middle war years. The new Keeper fully supported the long-standing church doctrine of spreading the Flame. She also made certain that she curried favor among the nation's hard-liners, who so dominated the ruling circles. Still, her approach and dictates were significantly more moderate than Serrain's. Keeper Tagor began to emphasize core values—using military might to do good, not just win battles. For example, it was during her reign that the church officially abandoned its stance that shifters and changelings were the "spawn of evil." No doubt mindful of the world's legitimate grievances against Thrane, and the dire circumstances of the Purified in other nations, Keeper Tagor began to stress redemption and repentance.

In the end, however, Thrane was surrounded by enemies and ruled by the most militant of the clergy. Widespread internal debate, investigation, or condemnation would have been suicidal. A weakening of the military or any retreat from religious fervor would have caused revolt. Keeper Tagor conducted a long and slow battle against extremism, primarily by countering her predecessor's rigid appointments with much more thoughtful and balanced priests. Her battle for the soul of the church was often a lonely one; in her later years, a formidable proponent of Thrane domination arose in the form of High Cardinal Krozen. Given the forces arrayed against her, and the monumental task of returning the Silver Flame to the good graces of the world, Keeper Tagor might have been the greatest of the Silver Flame prelates.

937

First Battlefield Constructs

Although crude golems, designed by House Cannith and labeled "warforged," had served in limited numbers in royal guards throughout Khorvaire since before the war, the first extensive use of constructs in war came in the late 930s. Using designs created in conjunction with a college of wizards who referred to themselves as silver pyromancers, House Cannith pushed forward with a project first proposed decades ago by King Thalin: a mechanical horse.

In 937, the dragonmarked house began large-scale manufacturing. Late the next year, the constructs were numerous enough that the Knights of Thrane could conduct the famous "Clockwork Charge" on the backs of perfectly obedient mechanical steeds. The larger conflict, the Battle of Marsden Field, is not especially memorable—Thrane held the field against a small Cyran army that landed by sea near Aruldusk. The charge, however, was remarkable. The riders' attack order held perfect shape against the veteran pikemen of Cyre. The cavalry commanders of Thrane asked for more such steeds, but the nobles and riding-priests disdained them as "contrivances" and "unnatural to the way of war." Thrane had other interests than lining the pockets of House Cannith.

Cyre, on the other hand, quickly grasped the value of clockwork steeds. The nation's close ties with House Cannith and a massive investment by the crown ensured that significant numbers of Cyre cavalry would soon benefit from these wondrous constructs. More important, a seed had been planted among the artificers and smiths of House Cannith. Years of experimentation followed, and enormous sums were consumed in a search to create even more wondrous mechanical warriors.

939–946

REPRISALS AND REVISIONS

Few wars pass from triumph to triumph. Persistence even in the face of soul-crushing defeat is the mark of a true conqueror.

—Analects of War by Karrn the Conqueror

Over time, the flashpoints of combat grew familiar: The Crying Fields, Cragwar, Eston, Vathirond, and Korth were all venues for repeated engagements. In the north, Aundair and Thrane traded quite a bit of territory while Karrnath mostly engaged with Cyre. In the south, Breland, Cyre, and Thrane often shifted alliances.

939

SECOND SIEGE OF KORTH

Emboldened by Cyre's continuing occupation of southern Karrnath and Kaius's focus tied up there, Aundair launched a massive raid. Surprised by the lack of initial resistance, advance units actually reached sight of the walls of Korth and set up camp. Both sides prepared for a siege, but it was more anticipation than action. Aundair's supply lines remained too tenuous to support extended offensive operations so deep in Karrnath. The two sides settled into a relatively peaceful siege during the winter of 939, but once the weather cleared and Karrnathi forces began gathering in 940, Aundair withdrew. The citizens of Korth refer to this time as "the Short Siege."

A second reason for Aundair's retreat was an uneasy succession. Crown Prince Aarott reached the age of maturity, and he and his supporters began to prepare for his coronation. Regent Marlex initially balked at losing the reins of power. Quite a bit of machination accompanied the removal of the regent in 940 and King Aarott's crowning the next year. To this day, the Aundair monarchy has not forgotten the role intrigue played in securing its power.

942

THIRD BATTLE OF THE PLAINS OF TALENTA

In a combat freed from the nearly immobile battle lines along Scions Sound, Cyran and Karrnathi forces clashed in the Plains of Talenta. The site of the battle was a hundred miles southeast of Vulyar.

The 900 Cyran heavy cavalry rode clockwork steeds, and the Oak and Ash Regiment added 400 heavy foot. King Connos's forces also featured superior arcane might from two companies of the First Metrol Wands (including a young Shaldra Antarielle, later a famous traitor), as well as 3,500 mercenary elf archer/skirmishers and the 2,000 light cavalry of the Kalazar Horse Brigade. In addition, the Making First Legion, the Making Fourth Legion, and the Saerun Pike were all present, adding 7,000 infantry to an army totaling roughly 15,000.

The Karrnathi forces were more numerous, including the First and Second Atur Legion (3,000 skeletons and 3,000 zombies), 4,000 displaced Rekkenmark crossbows (2,000 of them undead), and the 8,500 soldiers of the Korth and Vedykar heavy infantry. The heavy cavalry numbered 1,800, including bone knight regiments from the Order of the Onyx Skull and the Order of the Emerald Claw, as well as an undead heavy cavalry force, the City of Night Regiment. In total, Karrnath brought more than 20,000 units to the battle. Its most valuable force was a group of Talenta halfling scouts who called themselves the Thunder Riders.

Cyre knew that its infantry, even with excellent wand and archer support, could not withstand the shock troops of the heavily armored Karrnathi bone knight cavalry. King Connos's troops chose their ground, dug a magically disguised trench, and made clever use of illusions to draw their opponents out. In the morning, the plan went, the Karrnathi cavalry would see the weak formation of Cyran infantry in the center and charge. Instead, the horses would fall into a leg-shattering pit half a mile long.

Cyre's plan unraveled when one of the halfling Thunder Riders tumbled into the trench while scouting perilously close to the Cyran lines. He returned to the

ADVENTURE SEEDS

—Serving as scouts for Cyre, the adventurers discover a column of enemy troops ranging south and west of the Cyre River. Word must be gotten to Metrol immediately. Can the party survive a harrowing ride through a burning countryside to give Metrol precious time to prepare?

—Hired to guard Karrnathi diplomats in Wroat, the PCs are present when early word of the sack of Metrol arrives. They are ordered to get the negotiators to safety and begin laying the groundwork for clandestine operations against Breland.

scout camp and reported his finding. An enormous debate erupted. Some halflings urged silence. Others insisted that the Karrnathi overlords who held their leaders hostage should be punished. The majority, however, reasoned that since the pit would destroy the Karrnathi mounts, the Cyran trick was dishonorable and evil—few things have more value to Talenta halflings than livestock, whether reptilian or equine. So the Karrnathi were warned, and the next morning, the cavalry charged the flanks while Karrnathi skeletons and zombies fought through the trench.

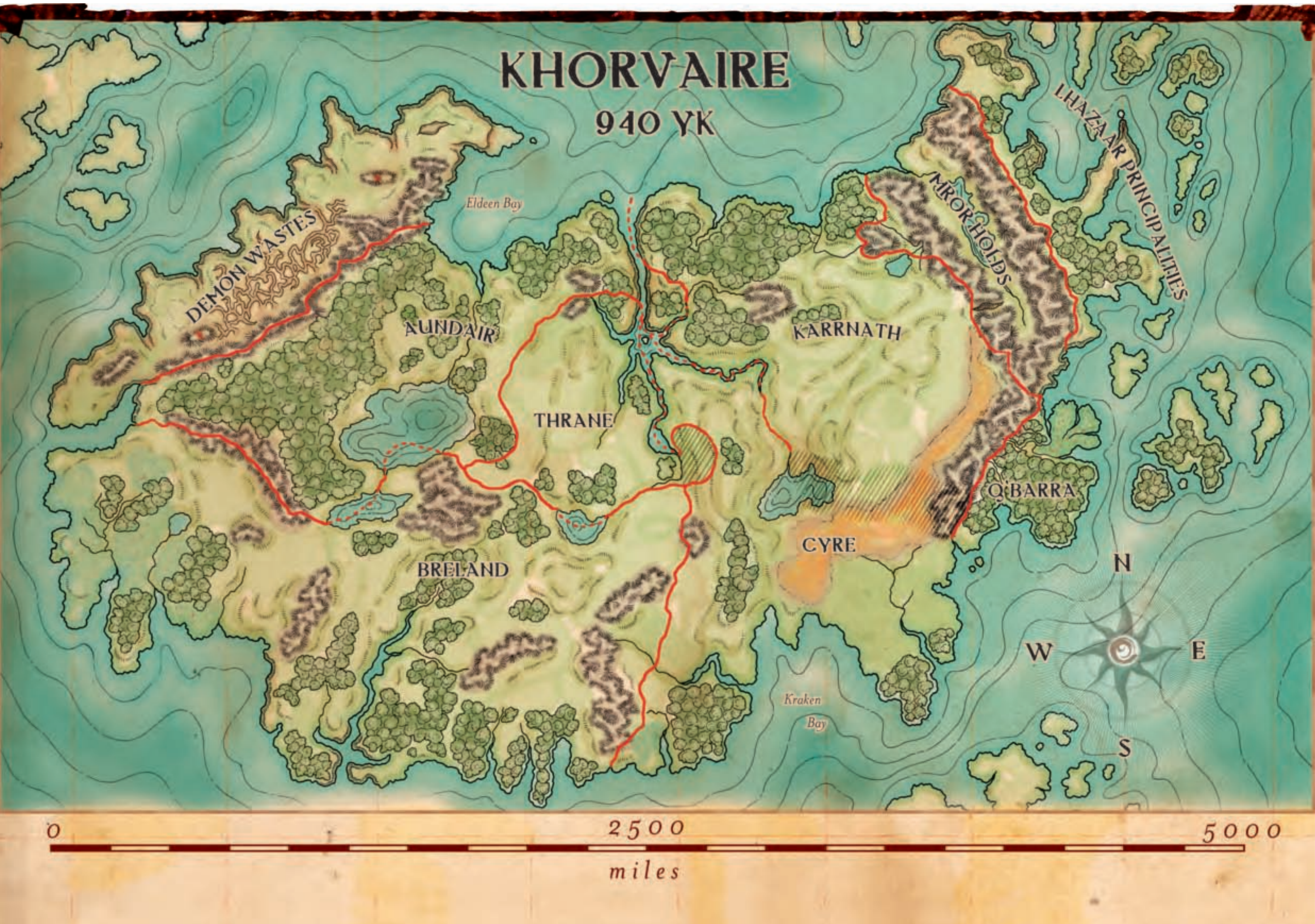
The fight was vicious. Even though they avoided the trap, the Karrnathi army failed to rout the Cyrans. The Valenar mercenaries, in particular, caused havoc wherever they rode, their skirmishing speed and aggression more than making up for their lighter armor and weapons. The elves devastated the Rekkenmark crossbows at one point, throwing the Karrnathi flank into confusion and preventing the Order of the Onyx Skull from fully exploiting its advance. In the end, the Cyran lines were forced back, but they did not break.

The following day, the pattern was repeated, with Cyran pike and wands holding up the Karrnathi heavies. On the third day, the Karrnathi undead and riders attempted to bypass the Cyran forces by marching through the night, but Cyran mounted scouts noticed the movement and countermaneuvered. Rather than attack against prepared forces, the Karrnathi troops set up defensively. The Cyrans, already tired, declined to engage, and both armies withdrew.

Cyre's triumph in facing down a superior force through superior tactics and generalship was soon dashed. King Connos had fallen in the battle—a fact that was hidden from all but his closest supporters. (His page, a lad named Marson, wore the king's helm and armor on the third day.) The march back to Metrol became a funeral procession as word spread of the battle's cost.

King Connos was succeeded by his eldest daughter, Dannel, who was just seventeen years old when crowned. Initially, Queen Dannel's power extended only to the great cities of Cyre: Eston, Metrol, Kalazart, and Making. The other great domains of Cyre were held by the proud and powerful dukes and duchesses, many of whom were dismayed at the placement of a youth on the throne at such a dire time. As a result, the succession was not a smooth one, and Cyre almost splintered. Still, Dannel proved tougher than anyone expected, and in less than two years, the wayward dukes and duchesses were bound to her in the Oath of Making, a ceremony that reunified the fracturing kingdom.

Like Keeper Serrain, Queen Dannel is one of the most important and tragic figures of the war years. Elevated to power at a tender age, she shone in her early years—displaying diplomatic skills beyond her years. She was also celebrated as the embodiment of Cyran appreciation: The queen was an accomplished musician, poet, and debater. In a more peaceful time, she might have become Cyre's greatest leader. But because she was faced with the unspeakable and continuous horrors of war, her passion and sensitivity nearly destroyed her. On more than one occasion, the queen



retreated into stark depressions, leaving her nation adrift. These periods of despairing inactivity contrasted sharply with Dannel's manic resolve during her brighter times. Cyre's fortunes during the remainder of the war clearly ebbed and flowed with the mental stability of her queen.

In the west, Aundair held steady against Karrnath and continued to push against Thrane. In 944, Aundair captured the city of Lathleer without great violence, using a powerful stone-shaking spell to destroy the city gates and then demanding the city's honorable surrender. The citizens of Lathleer, cowed by the flashy display of Aundairian arcane might, chose to surrender the city on good terms. Aundair treated the citizens well from the beginning, though a few reports claimed that the citizens were enchanted into compliance.

That same year, the Aundairian wizard Kaldor Ravalon, a devout but secret worshiper of the Silver Flame, defected from the Arcane Guards of Fairhaven to join the Temple Guards of Flamekeep. At first, his defection was little noticed, but over the following years he shared his expertise in animating vessels, shaping soul containers, and infusing metals, and in this way he helped Thrane magewrights devise the silvereye marauder (*Five Nations* 155). Two years later, in 946, the first squads of silvereye marauders were unleashed against Thrane enemies. Others were built to guard the temples of the Silver Flame.

In 945, Daslin, the Blood Prince of Thrane, died in his sleep at his hunting lodge. His son Erivon ir'Wynarn became the blood regent, but like Daslin possessed no real power. Erivon, however, soon proved himself a more active figurehead than his father, accepting a commission as a captain in the Knights of Thrane. Confirming Thrane's occupation of the Thaliost area, Erivon built a royal estate on cliffs overlooking Scions Sound, christening it Silvercliff Castle. The Blood Prince's first campaign began in 946, leading Thrane's troops in the Fourth Siege of Eston, this one a four-year affair.

947–963

Old Battlefields and New Combatants

An ally is only as uncompromising as the circumstances that compel it to fight. Prepare well for the day when friends become enemies.

—Analects of War by Karrn the Conqueror

After fifty years of near-continuous war, all five nations were bloodied and depleted, but none was defeated. Every nation's economy was now committed to wartime production. The militaries had become expert at training new units, adapting to new tactics, and incorporating new equipment. With periodic breaks in pitched combat, the officers found that they could sustain the war far longer than they had previously imagined. Furthermore, with each passing year, battlefield wrongs mounted, and revenge became ever more necessary. Like their weapons, the Five Nations had been tempered by fire and honed to a keen edge.

947–952

Cauldron and West

During the late 940s, the battle lines and borders around Vathirond, an area that became known as the Cauldron, changed constantly. Most of these lands had been Brelish before the war, but that nation had been pushed away from Scions Sound for so long that it sought only a more or less secure hold at Lurching Tower. Cyre was too involved at Eston and farther north to do more than contain Thrane's expansion west of Kalazart.

In 947, Thrane conducted a campaign of plunder throughout the Cauldron. Monasteries, libraries, treasuries, and merchant counting houses were systematically looted, their treasures "restored" to homes and churches in Sigilstar, Aruldusk, and Flamekeep. Although Keeper Tagor praised the efforts to secure religious artifacts, her "blessing" before the campaign was far less strident than those of her predecessors, and she cautioned against excesses.

In 948, the Cyran lords based in Kalazart and Saerun decided that the raiding had to be stopped and brought in thousands of Talenta halfling mercenaries. This measure proved quite effective, as the halfling dinosaurs trampled their way through Thrane's peasant levies. However, in 949, the halflings decided (in their tribal way) that they should march against Thrane to restore Cyre's honor. They overran numerous supply points, pillaged Thrane villages and storehouses as far north as Lessyk, and generally made nuisances of themselves along the Brey riverlands. Cyran attempts to unify the small bands of raiders into a potent military force that could achieve significant territorial gains proved useless. The halfling raids churned the already blooded Khorvairian heartlands, but changed little in the way of borders.

In 950, the raiding of the halflings and the commissioning of new Cyran naval vessels based in Scions Sound made it impossible for Thrane to maintain the Fourth Siege of Eston. Another conclave of the tribes took place, and the halflings decided that they had succeeded in restoring the balance of honor. They departed Cyre, taking much food and wealth from the countryside around them.

Thrane responded to the tribes' departure by redeploying the troops from the siege into the Cauldron. Soldiers

Adventure Seeds

—The PCs are members of the staff of Aundair's Regent Marlex. They are also beholden to Duke ir'Bane, a staunch supporter of Crown Price Aarott. What will be their role in the coming succession struggle?

—Part of the Thunder Rider halfling scouts, the PCs are tasked with reconnoitering the Cyran lines and have stumbled across the hidden trench. They must make their way back to their comrades, stake their position in the great debate that follows, and then conduct themselves honorably in the coming battle.

of the Legion of the Pure sacked Starilaskur and engaged Valenar mercenaries in Breland's employ south of Vathirond. Farther west, Thrane overran Cragwar and Sword Keep, driving Brelish troops south to Hatheril. Brelish reinforcements, buttressed by the Manifest Legion, later drove the Thranes out of Starilaskur, but, as had become all too common, nothing was really settled.

Breland's reversals in the Cauldron and west of Lake Brey resulted from a lack of troops. Thrane caught the southern kingdom as it was focused far to the west. A large Brelish force crossed Silver Lake and occupied Sylbaran, Greenblade, and Erlaskar. Resistance proved to be minimal, primarily coming from the bandits active in the area. Aundairian regulars were nearly nonexistent in the western reaches of the country, and King Aarott was far more committed in Ghalt and northwestern Karrnath. A single Brelish army held all three cities—in some, the soldiers outnumbered the citizens—for several years until it voluntarily withdrew in 954.

In 951, the armies of Thrane and Breland clashed again at Cragwar and Hatheril. Thrane also moved in force against both Tower Valiant and Tower Vigilant, seeking to crush Aundair's strongest border defenses. The year-long twin sieges are the subject of a national epic beloved by Aundairians of every station as a reminder of the personal tragedies of war and the greatness of Aundair. A concerted effort led by the Knights Arcane finally broke the siege during a campaign that came to be known as the End Year Offensive.

Vathirond had the misfortune to be located in the heart of the Cauldron. That the city exists at all today is a testament to the diplomacy and flexibility (some say cowardice) of its leaders. Long a cosmopolitan crossroads between Breland, Thrane, and Cyre, the city elders declared it "neutral" when Thrane first approached its walls early in the war. The Brelish garrison was asked to depart or convert into neutral "Vathirond Watchers." Vathirond welcomed Thrane, Cyre, or Breland forces throughout the war, transitioning as necessary to its new overlord. Although its open policy rarely prevented hardship among the citizenry, the city's lack of resistance to the constant stream of armies kept it from complete annihilation.

953

SACK OF WESTHAVEN

The First Company of the Sky, an Aundairian dragonhawk squadron on extended patrol over the northern shores of Karrnath, discovered that the privateer port of Westhaven was strangely quiet. No vessels of the Karrnathi navy were berthed, and many of the privateers were absent. The dragonhawk riders quickly led a detachment of Aundairian ships to the harbor a few days later. Striking at night with magical fire, the vessels burned the docks and bombarded the shore defenses. In the morning, Aundairian marines invaded, supported by the Stormhome Wands and the dragonhawk riders. They plundered the city, razing it to the ground. Westhaven was left in charred ruins. It would never recover its former status as a privateering harbor.

955

BATTLE OF THE CRYING FIELDS

Though the Crying Fields had been the site of numerous battles and would be revisited again in the remaining war years, the 955 battle in that ghastly place is the most famous. This was the clash that gave the area its name.

The Thrane legions were formed from 19,000 peasant levy spear and axe, 2,400 heavy horse including a company of Flamehand paladins, 1,600 veteran archers of the Third Athandra, and a company of silver pyromancers from the Order of the Pure. With a strength of 23,000 troops, the faithful were confident of success.

The Aundairians should have been led by General Retief Dekker, but that noble warrior was assassinated on the eve of battle. Command was quickly granted to the young Captain of Horse Lord Darro. Although higher-ranking nobles were available, the other officers knew and trusted Lord Darro, and he enjoyed the support of King Aarott.

The Aundairian order of battle included 400 knight phantoms of the Knights Arcane, 2,000 heavy pike, 6,000 light foot including half-elf and centaur troops from the Western Reaches, 1,600 magewrights of the Arcane Foot, 2,000 veteran artificer-supported crossbowmen, the famous wizard company of the Fairhaven Wands, and ten lances of the King's Regiment of Dragonhawks. In numbers they were no more than 13,000, but in quality they far outshone the Thrane levies.

After an hour of maneuvers, spells, and archery, Aundair's mastery became apparent. Once the knights and levies had been stung harshly several times, the foot-priests and sacrosancts could no longer hold them. The Thrane heavy cavalry began a massed charge directly at the center of the Aundairian line, desperate to come to grips with its foe.

The Aundairians outfoxed the Thranes. As crossbows ripped into the knights' charge, an illusion was torn away, revealing that what seemed a line of light foot was actually the Aundairian heavy pike. The pike countered the cavalry's charge as dragonhawks flew onto the scene, engaging the Order of the Pure pyromancers and spreading chaos in the ranks. Although initially stopped, the heavy cavalry reformed with huge numbers of levied axemen. At this point, the Flamehand paladins unleashed their silvereye marauders, sending them after the Fairhaven Wands. Aundair's right flank broke. Miraculously, at roughly the same time, the Thrane heavy cavalry—mauled and spellscarred from the heavy pike and the magewrights supporting it—withdrew. The supporting axemen could do little but engage in a fighting retreat.

Aundair held the field, but only just. Thousands had perished. After all that bloodshed, hardly an acre of land changed hands. To this day, the slaughtered of the Crying Fields reenact their futile sacrifice.

955

CARDINAL YISEK'S DEFIANCE

The Thrane casualties in the Cauldron, near Cragwar, and in the Crying Fields were serious blows to Thrane's military. For the first time since the rise of the Righteous Kingdom, real debate arose. Cardinal Yisek, a confidant of the Keeper and a moderate, spoke out against the carnage, claiming that too many had been sacrificed for too little.

Many of the citizens of Thrane privately agreed that the war had become too costly—it had killed and crippled tens of thousands of young people (no village was without a monument and at least one armless, legless, or blind veteran). Still, few were brave enough to speak out against the conscriptions. This made Cardinal Yisek's strident objections even more powerful; it opened up a subject that had been debated privately for years but rarely addressed at temple or in the public square. Now came criticism of the army, its generals, and the Diet of Cardinals. Many who had lost loved ones appeared at church to light silver flames in support of Yisek.

The hard-liners, who apparently had prepared for this day, acted swiftly. A number of prominent Cardinals, including a majority of the Diet, warned against displaying weakness and unleashing doubt. Thrane was committed to the war and to spreading the glow of the Silver Light. Yisek and his few supporters were muted, and dissension in the military ranks quelled forcefully. Although rumors circulated that the Keeper held Yisek dear, her only statements urged calmness and compromise.

Tragically, the internal debate in Thrane was cut short as Breland, Aundair, and Cyre took advantage of its opponent's turmoil. Launching offenses or large raids, the three nations sought to finally end Thrane's war. Instead, they succeeded only in rallying the Thranes behind the hard-liners. The wavering citizens saw no option but to renew their devotion and their war effort.

Cardinal Yisek left Flamekeep with an escort of the Avenging Hand and traveled south to Vathirond, then by lightning rail to Sharn. Already an old man, he was welcomed there as a voice for peace and became an outspoken critic of the war, respected by many—and ignored by the leaders of the Five Nations.

956–959

ELDEEN AND VALENAR INDEPENDENCE

Other than the long siege of Drum Keep and the nearly unopposed Brelish invasion north of Silver Lake, little of military import occurred in the western reaches of Aundair. Still, Karrnath, the Lhazaar Principalities, and even Breland fomented rebellion. From isolated highwaymen, the difficulties grew to include entire companies of bandits and even bandit armies (one seized and looted the city of Alvirad in 954, and another razed Niern the following year). Neither the Aundairian rangers, the wizards of Arcanix, nor the court of King Aarott could spare the troops to root out the bandits. Every petition to "provide safety on our roads and peace in our villages" was answered with stony silence, with suggestions that it was a local matter, or with counterrequests for additional troops to send to the front against Thrane and Karrnath.

In 956, the Wardens of the Wood decided to act. They raised troops from the human, centaur, and elf inhabitants of the western reaches, and in a single ruthless season they found and crushed nearly all of the major bandit armies. Although this act was generally cheered by the Aundairian nobles, a few of the more prescient saw the coming danger and urged the king to dismantle or at least reassign the newly mobilized forces.

That same year, another neglected backwater region began to assert itself. Claiming domain over "ancestral lands," an army of elf mercenaries made themselves the lords of southern Cyre and declared the newfound sovereignty of the Valenar nation. The elves renamed the cities, and a number of Aerenal elves were brought in to build things anew in the elf style. The humans of the area raised no objection—Metrol was a distant and far-off place. Queen Dannel and her generals decried the Valenar betrayal, but could spare no forces to retake the land. Indeed, they could ill afford the loss of the elf mercenaries already in their employ. In the end, the new land was not recognized, but no army marched south, and payments to elf mercenaries continued.

The actions of the elves in 956 were puzzling. A people devoted to battle, who idolized their ancestors' struggle against the overwhelming might of the goblin empire, had never displayed an interest in holding land. After declaring the sovereignty of a huge area, precious few took on even the most fundamental tasks of governance. Indeed, the former Cyrans discovered a degree of independence they had never known before.

Some have opined that the Valenar warriors actually sought to instigate an invasion, bringing glorious war to the sweeping plains of Valenar, where they could reenact the struggle of their honored ancestors. If so, they must have been sorely disappointed when Cyre refused their bait.

Whatever the true objective, Valenar independence resulted in a greater number of Valenar warclans employing House Deneith to broker contracts with other nations. Again, more than a few Valenar bands simply roved the Talenta Plains and other places as a freestanding fighting force, loyal only to their battlelust.

Cyre's quiescence in the face of revolt was just the latest in a spiraling cycle. Queen Dannel, frustrated in shepherding her "loyal" dukes and barons, distraught about continually sending proud young men and women to die in meaningless battles, and enraged by her troops' inability to halt Thrane incursions in the Cauldron, had crept toward an emotional precipice. The loss of the southern territories pushed her into deep despair. Cyran military operations became disjointed as word of the queen's affliction spread. Cyran nobles stood fast in Metrol, Making, and Saerun, but the rest of the country was largely left to fend for itself. The queen's authority declined sharply, and the people began whispering, quietly or openly, that perhaps a new monarch was needed.

Perhaps emboldened by the success of the Valenar, the Eldeen Reaches declared itself independent in 958. The Wardens of the Wood, under the guidance of the Great Druid Oalian, announced the new nation's neutrality. The few remaining Aundairians were politely but firmly asked to leave. Most marched out; a notable exception was the "Lost Brigade" of Captain Naathen Sandburr. The site of that unit's defiance was near Mossmantle, in a place now called the Bloody Glen. None of the 400 light infantry under Sandburr's command survived, and the captain himself was crucified on an ancient oak.

Unlike Cyre, Aundair did not intend to sit idly by while more than half the kingdom seceded. A campaign against the Reaches, however, would require significant redeployment. After years of tenuous occupation, and faced with Karrnathi forces newly freed by Cyre's retrenchment, King Aarott finally abandoned his foothold in Karrnath. Aundairian forces withdrew to a new defensive line at Starpeak Mountains. During this retreat, perhaps seeking to pacify his enemies, King Aarott renounced the Cyran claim to Galifar's throne and claimed he would fight only to restore Aundairian borders.

His military consolidated, King Aarott personally led the Army of Western Pacification into the Reaches in 959. Because Aarott was unable to reposition more than a fair-sized army from the long front with Thrane, and wholly unschooled in forest warfare, his advance quickly bogged down. Still, the king remained in the area, leading raids and rallying defenses. He vowed no more Aundairian land would be lost in his lifetime. This promise would prove true, but not as he had hoped.

959

BATTLE OF SILVER LAKE

After more than thirty years in power, Breland's King Boranex began to think that his largely defensive approach in the war had left him without a meaningful legacy. He decided that he would bring an army north into the newly declared Eldeen Reaches, offering protection and a "civilizing" force. With great fanfare, he gathered 2,000 well-trained heavy horse, 2,000 dragoons, 7,500 heavy foot, 500 Brelish Rangers, 4,000 crossbowmen, and two companies of wands, the Wroat Wands and the Sharn Towers.

The newly independent Wardens of the Wood had no interest in trading one uninvolved royal for another. Although pressed by King Aarott's campaign in the north, they called upon forest denizens to counter the Brelish on the north shore of Silver Lake. The Eldeen defenders numbered 20 heavy treant shock troops, 300 satyr skirmishers, 900 centaur light horse, 3,300 human infantry, 1,200 elf and half-elf archers, and a company of druid "wands." All told, the Eldeen army barely topped 6,000.

Although outnumbered, the Wardens zealously guarded their homelands and cunningly outmaneuvered an overconfident and poorly planned Brelish incursion. The Reachers drove the southerners back across Silver Lake. King Boranex was wounded by mageshot and almost captured when his boat capsized. By shedding his armor, the king remained afloat long enough to reach shore, but he contracted a coughing plague and was taken back to Wroat on a litter. Despite the ministrations of several clerics, the king's illness refused to pass. He would spend the rest of his days in declining health.

Although largely occupied in the Reaches, Aundair took advantage of Brelish and Thrane distractions and launched a strike force south against the depleted Thrane garrison in Cragwar. After a short siege, that city fell in 959.

961

YEAR OF NEW KINGS

961 was a year of transition in Aundair, Karrnath, and Breland.

According to proclamation, King Kaius II died as any Karrnathi monarch should—leading his troops. In fact, after fifty years of rallying his people in desperate times, the aged king's body could no longer contain his spirit. One frigid morning in 960, while reviewing his Conqueror's Host, Kaius II simply collapsed and breathed his last. Upon his death, the largely cowed Karrnathi warlords began to assert themselves. Kaius's son, Prince Jaron, was forced to conduct a royal tour to ensure a smooth transition of power. The king-to-be soon found that the nobles wanted to see a "redirection" of Karrnath ambitions. They despised the nation's largely defensive stance since the triumph at Metrol. In truth, these sentiments matched Jaron's mindset perfectly. He assured the nobles that, once he was crowned, Karrnathi triumph would soon follow. Aundair and Cyre had been beaten back; it was time to retaliate against Thrane's abandonment and insults. After his coronation in 961, King Jaron ordered plans for a glorious assault of Thrane.

King Arrott of Aundair died fighting against Eldeen raiders in the west. His daughter Barvette took the throne (though she was not formally crowned until 962). The new queen avenged her father's death by imprisoning and then executing the ambassadors that the Eldeen Reaches had sent to Fairhaven to sue for peace. The new queen launched another series of incursions into the forest realm. These were largely a waste of soldiers and resources, but some territory that Eldeen at first claimed as its own (notably the Duskwood) was taken and held by Aundair.

In Breland, the high command received ailing King Boranex's approval for an attempt to retake the rich mines of Cragwar, this time from its new lords in Aundair. Although this would prove to be the only major confrontation between regular Aundairian and Brelish forces, the month-long siege featured heavy fighting and much bloodshed. Among the dead were two princes, Boranex's eldest. In the end, the city was taken and the royal bodies recovered, but the price paid in Brelish morale was high. The entire nation mourned the brothers, and bards soon named them the "Martyrs of Cragwar." One month later, the bedridden and broken-hearted King Boranex died. Rumors circulated that he had simply lost his will to live.

So it was that the young, brash Prince Boranel was recalled from delving in the gambling hells and ancient crypts of Sharn and told he would be crowned. The 961 coronation was a swift and simple affair, "as befitted a land at war," according to Boranel. The new king immediately plunged into the minutiae of running the war, proving himself every bit his father's son. With renewed morale, Breland prepared for battle again. The king also showed that his personal losses had not dampened his lust for life. By marrying a Cyran, he proclaimed that love overcame any politics.

961

SIEGE OF SHADUKAR

King Jaron of Karrnath was barely six months in power when a Karrnathi army gathered for the promised Thrane assault. After staging maneuvers around Rekkenmark to draw Thrane's attention, the bulk of the Karrns headed south, crossed through northwestern Cyre (with little opposition), then traversed Scions Sound, landing north of Shadukar. The forced march and soarwood skiff water crossing took the city completely by surprise. General Horacht and the Karrnathi troops looted and pillaged at will. Hundreds of citizens were massacred and hundreds more died of famine while the Karrns ran rampant. As usual, the corpses of the dead were animated to reinforce the Karrnathi ranks.

The Church of the Silver Flame sent soldiers and knights from Flamekeep to liberate the city, and the siege of Shadukar began. Thrane pressed the Karrns hard, but General Horacht proved himself a master of defensive strategy, making Thrane pay dearly for each assault, counterattacking with sallies against Thrane camps and positions, and using powerful wands and artillery forces to keep the muddy ground between besiegers and city walls a deadly quagmire.

In the end, Karrnathi forces retreated by water when supplies and troops finally grew short in 962. Still, the withdrawal was anything but quiet—General Horacht ordered Shadukar be "put to the torch," after sealing the city gates shut.

Although horrific, Horacht's tactics worked. The Karrn line of withdrawal was mostly unhindered as the Thrane army, by direct order of Keeper Tagor, focused on the trapped citizens. A spearhead under the command of Captain Malik Otherro saved many people, but the city fires were too well entrenched—the city was largely destroyed.

In the weeks after the fire, the Knights of Thrane and their cleric allies struggled to destroy the remaining undead and rid the city of its Karrnathi stench, but the damage and loss of life were staggering. The city never recovered, and most today believe it is haunted by the ghosts of its burned residents.

Thrane now found itself at war with all four of its neighbors. Even the most fanatical realized that situation would prove their undoing. Unwilling to seek peace with Aundair and unable to make headway with Cyre's despairing queen, the Diet ordered an end to raids and other operations in the south. Diplomats approached the new King Boranel. The Cardinals promised to withdraw Thrane's soldiers from most of eastern Breland, and quickly implemented that redeployment. The new king and the old priests seemed to put their nation's rocky relations behind them.

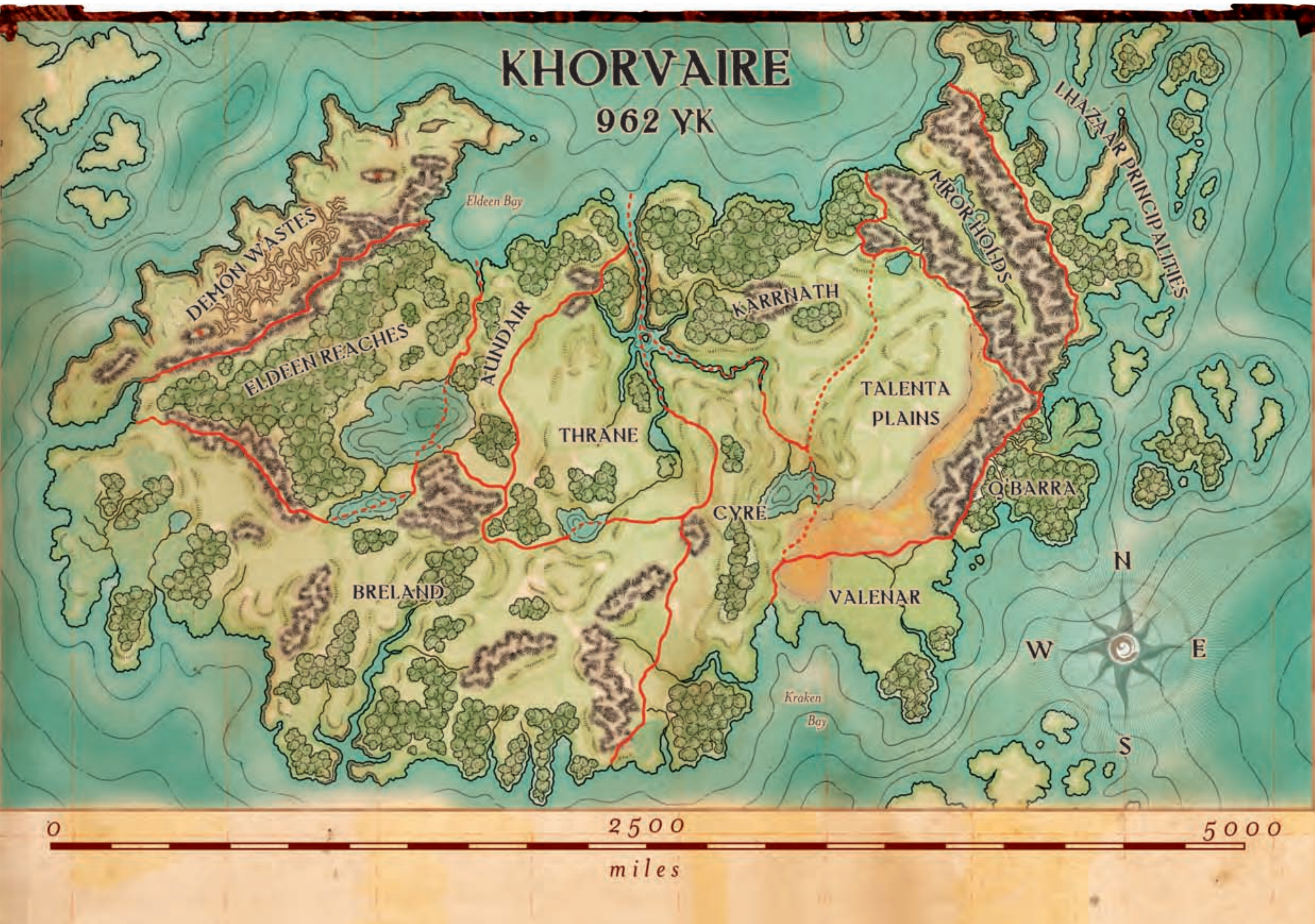
962

ZILARGO'S ALLIANCE

For almost seventy years, a Zil's response when asked about the status of his country's relations with any of the Five Nations was predictable: "We are a principality of the crown of Galifar, and we are the loyal servants of the kings and queens of Galifar." This proclamation meant the gnomes were effectively neutral—a useful status for Cyre, for Breland, and even for Thrane, all of whom paid enormous sums to Zilargo for siege engines, magical devices, elemental-bound armor and weapons, mercenary companies, and other supplies. This materiel was shipped by sea or lightning rail for prompt delivery—and covered by illusion to disguise its true nature.

In 962, however, the Zil mantra changed to "We are loyal allies of the Brelish crown." To the other nations, Zilargo's alliance with Breland seemed to cement the two nations, providing unending gnomish support for Brelish adventurism, led by the brash new king. These fears were realized, at least in part, when the gnomes granted Breland the exclusive services of their bound elementals. This was one of many factors that led the now-awakening giant to such dominance during the latter years of the war.

There's disagreement even among the gnomes as to why Zilargo's leaders decided to change their tune and formally align themselves with Breland. Some say that the new Brelish king made threats, and the Zils were making too much money to want battles so close to home. Others claim that King Boranel offered astounding sums of cash, and greed overcame them. A few even announce, with all sincerity, that Breland had shown that it was the only nation of honor and, as such, deserved Zilargo's support. In my view, the Zils acted no differently from the Reachers and the Valenar: They declared their independence. Subtle, cunning, and manipulative—in true Zil fashion—the "alliance" reassured Breland (its former master and the only real threat to Zilargo) while breaking from its control. After all, provinces of a country do not ally themselves with their overlord; only equals becomes allies. As for the timing of this move, the recent coronation of a young and inexperienced king in Breland cannot be overlooked. Indeed, Zilargo intrigue is a wondrous thing.



962~964

THRANE AND KARRNATH LOCK HORNS

Thrane's treaty with Breland secured its southern border, allowing it to turn its attention to avenging Shadukar (ironically, a city it did not even possess at the war's start). In 963, warships of Thrane punched through Karrnath's naval defenses, reached Korth, and began a devastating naval bombardment using *fireballs* heaved from magical catapults. The attack was not without cost—more than half of Thrane's fleet was destroyed.

Later that year, with winter approaching, the Second Legion of Atur left the Crimson Monastery and—under the direct command of the Blood of Vol—struck against the Silver Flame in Thaliost. The fighting in and around Thaliost was fierce, with foul and dishonorable practices on both sides. The priests of Vol animated some of the bodies of priests of the Silver Flame, enraging their followers, while the Thranes exsanguinated and burned the bodies of senior Karrnathi commanders, preventing their use by the corpse collectors.

The most telling result of these Thrane–Karrnathi campaigns, aside from the heavy loss of life and materiel, was to reduce pressure on Cyre. With neither Thrane nor Karrnath able to mount a major offensive against her nation, Queen Dannel spent this time forming and training new armies, incorporating the first warforged units. These years of quiet, and the enthusiasm of her advisors about the wonderful new living construct warriors, helped bring the queen out of her soul-crushing despair.

Of course, the relief of Cyre was not absolute. In 964, the famous wizard Hara Drosten failed to prevent a massive goblinoid raid from pillaging Saerun. Although the Winged Flame returned to drive the assailants away, this key southwest Cyre staging point was overrun and many of its people enslaved. This should have served as a warning of the goblin's intentions, but it was ignored at the time as the isolated actions of "a few bad apples." Cyre would come to regret this inattentiveness.

965~979

RISE OF THE WARFORGED

War often inspires innovation; be certain that advancements in the manner of conducting war accompany advancements in the means of doing so.
— Analects of War by Karrn the Conqueror

Although the warforged figured prominently only in the latter years of the war, Galifar's King Jarot actually ordered the first mechanical soldiers from House Cannith before his death. These simple golems proved far too reliant on their controllers and thus nearly useless on the battlefield. By 959, however, House Cannith had succeeded in improving its rudimentary prewar designs and introduced the first warforged titans. The house even managed to ramp up production quickly—twelve in the first year, twenty-three the year after, and forty-seven in 961. These were still early and unstable constructs, but both Breland and Cyre had the extraordinary sums necessary to purchase them, and the desire to work them into their military tactics. The titans' clear advantage compared to the automatons and clockwork steeds was that they required no direct guidance to operate successfully on the battlefield. They were fully capable of independent operation.

Despite their size, though, the titans were vulnerable to massed troops, particularly Thrane pike-and-axe counteroperations. Of the four hundred titans built from 959 to 964, only seventy-nine were still operating in 965. This depletion was partly a function of their experimental form, but House Cannith also noted that the titans were nearly always placed at the hottest and deadliest points of any engagement. Both Breland and Cyre requested that the titans be scaled down and made more reliable.

Six years after the creation of the titans, House Cannith perfected the modern-era warforged. Cyre was the first nation to invest heavily in the new warriors, and Breland and others soon followed. House Cannith began selling warforged by the score, by the hundreds, and in later years by the thousands.

In 967, Thrane sent two armies into Aundair, hoping to conquer Fairhaven. Aundair met the advancing columns, and, though outnumbered, Queen Barvette's troops drove the invaders back. Once again, Aundair's greater expertise triumphed over Thrane's numbers, but it felt its losses, particularly among irreplaceable elite forces, much more keenly.

In 968, young Prince Brusst of Cyre was born, named after Queen Dannel's grandfather. The queen's joy was short-lived, as Brusst the Younger died in infancy. The queen retreated to her chambers once again, and her nation feared another emotional breakdown.

That same year, Thrane attacked once again at the Crying Fields. Still depleted from its desperate defense the year before, Aundair could not hold the line. The Thranes celebrated their hard-fought victory, and Aundairian forces pulled back to Ghalt.

As the decade came to a close, the south erupted. In 969, a charismatic tribal leader named Haruuc led a hobgoblin rebellion. In a single season, the goblinoids took all the lands from the ocean to the river Ghaal, and from Sterngate to Kraken Bay. The Cyran and Brelish folk who lived there were either slaughtered or enslaved as the nation

ADVENTURE SEEDS

—The PCs, all with legitimate grievances against the privateers of Westhaven, are gathered in that port by Aundairian agitators. They are tasked with weakening the town's defenses and luring away the bulk of the vessels berthed there.

—Part of the Thrane relief efforts at Shadukar, the characters must battle wreckage, flames, and undead to bring as many citizens to safety as possible. Time is short, and the obstacles many.

of Darguun was born in blood. Queen Dannel was still not fully recovered from her son's death and refused to reassign troops from other fronts to beat back Haruuc. Cyrans held the line briefly at the Ghaal river, but then fell back to Lyrenton. Breland's initial reaction was far different.

970

BATTLE OF MARGUUL PASS

Darguun's declaration of independence from Cyre caused little concern in Breland. The goblinoids' treatment of Brelish settlers was a far different matter—the public demanded retaliation. A number of nobles and generals, mindful of the trouble caused by the Reachers and the Valenar and perhaps sensing an opportunity for Brelish expansion without actually engaging Cyran troops, pressed hard for an attack. King Boranel, reluctant to commit troops outside Brelish borders and cognizant of hobgoblin prowess from his adventuring days, was ultimately convinced to invade only after great debate. The High Command claimed that a quick strike through Marguul Pass would shatter the goblins and allow for the capture of Lhesh Haruuc's new capital at Rhukaan Draal. The leaders crowed about the might of the newest and greatest of the Brelish mobile fortresses, Veldarren. Mindful of disquiet among the troops caused by Boranel's hesitancy, the generals convinced him that a showing of royal support was necessary. They assured him that placing the nineteen-year-old Prince Boramil in the fortress would improve moral while keeping him safe and giving him "valuable battle experience."

Other than Veldarren, Breland's forces included 4,000 archers and crossbowmen, 2,200 light foot, 400 dragoons, and 2,000 veteran heavy foot, primarily halberd troops, with 300 Rangers serving as scouts. The cavalry numbered 400 light horse, but much of the pass was too steep or rocky for effective cavalry operations. The army also brought 40 warforged titans and 800 warforged foot. In all, a Brelish army of more than 10,000 soldiers marched up the pass.

Veldarren itself mounted 20 ballistas and fielded the Tower Wands of Sharn, proud General Minyu of Wroat, Prince Boramil, and the controversial Colonel Lady Urik Rowan (see page 50), leading the 240 souls of the Ardev dragoons. Still, Veldarren's deployment was more a result of Breland's arrogance and desire for an overwhelming victory, rather than of sound military planning. In truth, the fortress was far too large and cumbersome for an engagement in the close confines of the mountain pass. The Brelish would pay dearly for that miscalculation.

The goblinoid opposition was neither especially numerous nor well organized, but it was tenacious. The bugbear general Acthuun commanded 700 heavy infantry, 3,500 irregular infantry, 2,100 ranged troops (mostly shortbow archers and javelineers), a small company of sorcerers and artificers called the Hammerfists, and 800 wolf-riding cavalry. Achtuun's greatest asset was 600 heavy hobgoblin foot, well-disciplined veteran mercenaries. In all, just over 7,500 newly united defenders protected the rebel goblin kingdom, and they were much more lightly armed and armored than the Brelish forces.

A traditional standing fight would have been suicide for the Darguun forces, because their ranged troops could not match Brelish archery and their light infantry would be decimated by Brelish warforged and heavy foot. Cowing his troops into obedience by the sheer force of his personality, the cunning Acthuun refused to assault the mobile fortress or charge the columns as they marched east. Instead, the goblinoids used a series of landslides to close the pass and then set up their forces behind them. Given the massive bulk of the fortress, the Brelish spent more time digging than moving. A pattern was soon established: The fortress and human troops slowly cleared rubble and advanced up the pass in daylight, then hunkered down at night; the goblins ambushed outlying patrols and loosed more rockslides in the day, then at night picked off sentries or decimated troops stranded outside the fortress walls.

Frustrated after days of slow progress, General Minyu ordered a nighttime advance supported by arcane lanterns. His troops met a solid phalanx of elite hobgoblin heavy infantry a few miles below the top of the pass. The 600 hobgoblins were entrenched in a narrow gorge, and they fought viciously. One on one, they were more than a match for the Brelish heavy foot, their pikes several feet longer, their tower shields heavier, their will stronger. They held the gorge for more than seven hours, until the Brelish found a way onto the cliffs overlooking the gorge and buried them in a landslide.

The next morning the fortress approached the top of the pass, over the bodies of the fallen hobgoblins. Every pilot was needed to steer it through the narrow gap—the mountain walls were mere feet away. Suddenly, it became immobile, and every entrance opened. Either through treachery or superior spellcraft, the goblin Hammerfist sorcerers had somehow taken control of the fortress's arcane navigation and controls. Bugbears and hobgoblins hidden in shallow caves along the slopes leaped the narrow gaps (in some cases, simply reaching out and grasping the fortress sides) and scaled the walls, swarming over Veldarren. Goblin irregulars and wolf cavalry moved en masse to the open ramps. The Brelish center, almost entirely light troops, fell apart. The Brelish heavy foot, Rangers, warforged, and cavalry behind and on the flanks were pinned down by the goblin archers. After a furiously quick assault, the fortress fell. The Darguun army seized the ballistas and used the walls and siege engines to cut a swath through the remaining Brelish formations.

The aftermath was a chaotic, panicked rout. The whole venture was surely the most shameful and costly battle in Brelish military history. Of the "noble 10,000" who ventured up the pass, only about 1,500 battle-scarred survivors returned to tell the story at Sterngate. General Minyu and Prince Boramil were killed in battle. Only through desperate and heroic action did Lady Rowan and her dragoons contain the rout and prevent the Darguuls from spilling into Breland.

The mobile fortress was overrun by goblinoids as the walls cracked and its bulk settled firmly. Reinforced and entrenched where it rested—at the tightest chokepoint of the pass—Veldarren became a monumental headstone over the buried hobgoblins. From that day forward, Matshuc Zaal, "the Stolen Fortress," has sealed and guarded Marguul Pass. This surprising victory cemented Lhesh Haruuc's claim to power and is a point of great pride throughout Darguun. Stung by the military disaster, Breland abruptly sued for peace, and Darguun's birth pangs were over.

The depth of Boranel's unease about the Darguun invasion was revealed starkly when details of the fiasco started filtering in. The king's wrath was terrible, but, for the most part, it was directed at those who convinced him to launch the campaign in the first place, a group of headstrong generals and *nobles. More than a few of those who achieved their position due to birth, bribe, or bureaucracy were sacked. During the state funeral for his son, King Boranel spoke movingly of the grief he shared with so many Brelish families and publicly accepted full responsibility for the debacle. Echoing long-standing Brelish sentiments, he (somewhat foolishly) vowed that no more Brelish blood would be spilled in "foreign entanglements." When Zil diplomats approached him about negotiating a treaty with the Lhesh, he agreed.*

971

THE THIRD SIEGE OF KORTH

Showing some signs of recovery, Queen Dannel ordered a new offensive against the hated Karrns in 971. The Cyran forces, heavily supplemented by new warforged units, once again pushed north and laid siege to Korth. It was never a particularly active siege, but rather one intended to strangle Karrnath and slowly demoralize the nation, with its king effectively held prisoner by Cyran troops. Cyre maintained the siege for nearly two years, and King Jaron never left the city—indeed, he was rarely seen outside the palace, where he consulted with his generals and fomented strategies to repel the invaders.

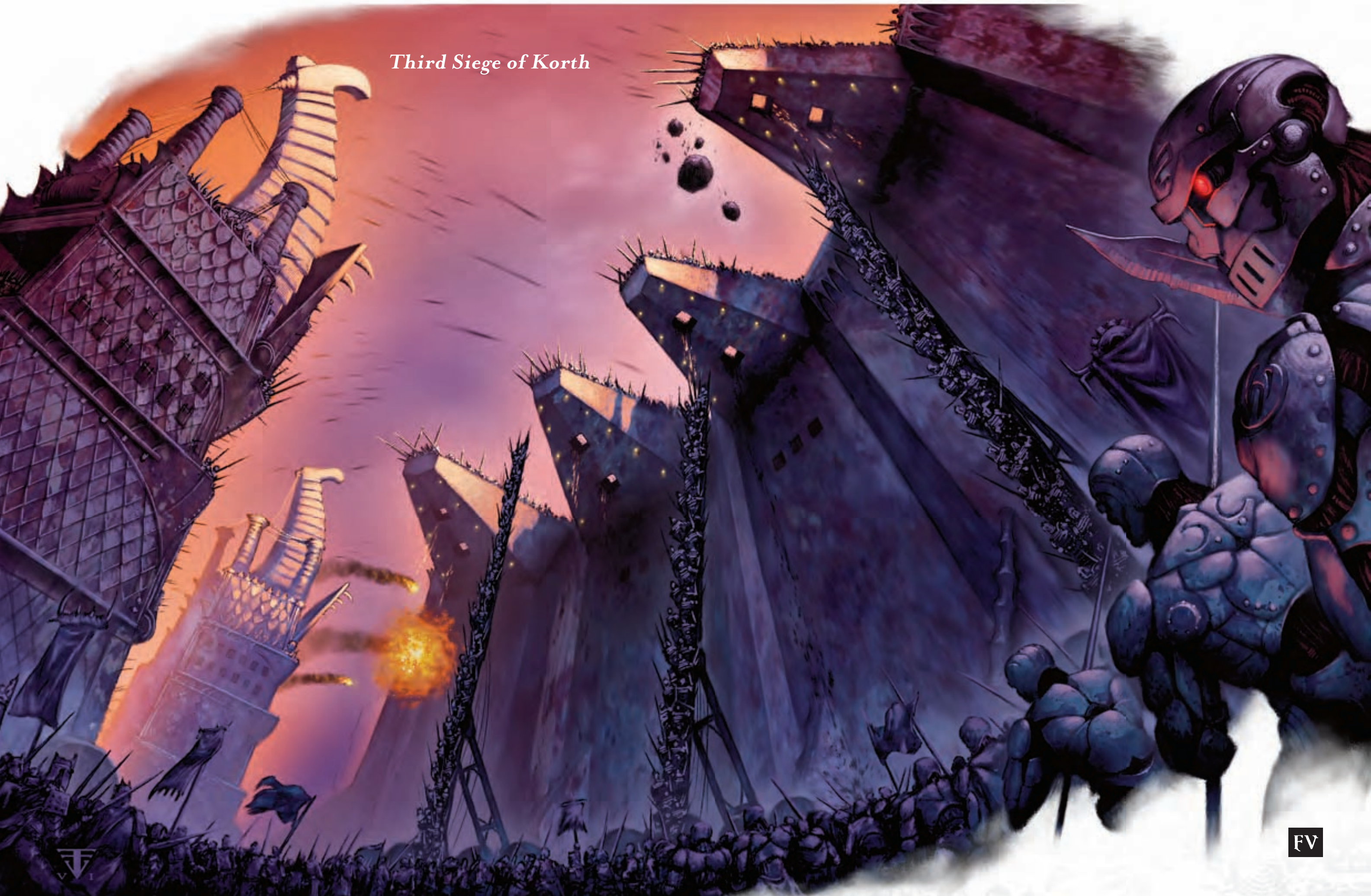
In the same year, Aundair's arcane siege engines pummeled Thrane's western defenses and destroyed Fort Light. The retreating Thrane soldiers entrenched at Sword Keep, keeping Aundair from sweeping across southern Thrane. A nearly simultaneous Aundairian strike toward the city of Daskaran was repelled, and its advance into northern Thrane stalled.

The winter of 972 brought a rare cold-weather assault on the walls of Korth. Cyre actually breached the walls, advanced a short distance into the city proper, and assaulted the Holygate from the inside.

The city garrison—the White Lions of Korth—managed to hold the gate long enough for clerics of the Sovereign Host, led by Alinda Roerith, to fuse it shut. Meanwhile, the city's defenders quickly converted each noble's solidly built homes into small fortresses, containing the Cyran breach. Eventually the Karrns rallied behind King Jaron, Alinda Roerith, and the Captain of the White Lions, and forced the Cyran back across the walls. The Holygate has remained sealed ever since.

The cost of victory was severe: King Jaron's eldest son Prince Drago was killed in battle. The king himself was wounded, but initial reports claimed it was minor. Soon after, the country suffered a second shock when it was announced that King Jaron had passed away unexpectedly. The same proclamation revealed that the old king had a newborn son, named after his father Kaius. This happy news did little to provide the nation with a strong wartime leader, however. Were it not for the Cyrans at Korth's gates, Karrnath might have dissolved as the warlords began bickering over who would be regent.

As Cyre prepared another attack, King Jaron's sister Moranna emerged from Atur at the head of a new army of undead and began marching east. This news heartened the Karrns, and they were once again able to hold Korth's walls. As Moranna approached, the Cyrans abandoned the siege. After coming so close to victory, the 973 retreat was a bitter pill for the Cyrans. Queen Dannel ordered the army to entrench in Cyran territory across Scions Sound.



Third Siege of Korth

Given her relief of Korth, it was not surprising that Moranna became regent the next year. No sooner had she consolidated power than Aundair struck by sea. This assault culminated in the Battle of Ten Bombards, a midsummer naval engagement between Aundair vessels, supported by dragonhawks and the Fairhaven Wands, against the First Fleet of Korth in Scions Sound. The Aundairian navy was beaten back, with significant losses on both sides.

974

THE REKKENMARK RAID

By 974, the former allies Thrane and Karrnath were deeply committed to their mutual war. Thrane railed against Karrnath's "undead abominations against nature and tradition" and Karrnath despised the "weak-minded priest-worshipers" who followed the Council of Cardinals from disaster to disaster. The two countries engaged in pitched and deadly naval clashes, they fought back and forth across Scions Sound to the north, they raided each other extensively, and they aided, when possible, the other's enemies.

The rancor resulted in raids against civilian targets becoming more common. In the winter of 974, a force of 50 Thrane wyvernriders flew over Scions Sound by night. Small numbers and speed kept their approach undetected by the coastal defenses, which were primarily focused on raiding ships. The riders arrived in the gray light before dawn and set to work, dropping their cargo of firebombs on Rekkenmark. They were gone by full daylight, though reports claim they roosted on the ruins of the White Arch Bridge to watch their handiwork. The fires caught hold in two areas: the creosote-stained piers of the harbor, and the wood, grain, wool, and cloth of the warehouse district. The city was nearly overcome by flames as the wind blowing off the sound fanned the conflagration. Civilian casualties were high.

The aftermath of the firebombing of Rekkenmark keenly reveals the ongoing struggles within Thrane. Military explanations that "fire is a divinely sanctioned weapon" and "this was our vengeance for Shadukar" were undermined when Keeper Tagor issued a lengthy "letter of regret." Breland, Cyre, Aundair, Zilargo, and even nobles of the dragonmarked houses responded favorably to the Keeper's words, but warned that if such an assault were repeated, Aundair, Breland, Cyre, and Karrnath would unite to burn every city of Thrane to its foundations. Ultimately, Keeper Tagor used the outcry against the incident to remove several hard-liners from positions of influence in her government. Even so, in later years, as the militants began to reassert themselves, the anniversary of the firebombing was declared a national holiday—and it is still celebrated to this day.

975 also saw the sorry remnants of Aundair's Army of Western Pacification retreat east of the Wynarn River. The stories those soldiers brought with them included trees that decapitated comrades, impossible elf archery, and the poisoning of springs. After their retreat to safer ground, they quickly recovered their morale but refused to return east. They significantly bolstered Aundair's efforts in the east and south, but the Eldeen was basically abandoned.

In 976, Regent Moranna of Karrnath stunned her country by outlawing the Order of the Emerald Claw. Though internal grumbling about the influence of the Emerald Claw had long existed, none foresaw the regent's seizing of the order's barracks and arresting of its most active knights. Some members were imprisoned for years; others were tried, convicted of treason, and executed. This blow against the order reduced the direct influence of the Blood of Vol at the highest levels of Karrnath's aristocracy and enhanced the monarchy, but the Emerald Claw was far from destroyed.

976~980

THRANE'S MANY ENEMIES

By 976, Keeper Tagor's attempts at moderation sparked a visible backlash within Thrane. The militants rallied around a zealous crusader—the young and newly invested Cardinal Krozen. Just as the Keeper launched a campaign to reaffirm the long-standing ceasefire with Breland (in fourteen years, this agreement had been bent on both sides by raids and border skirmishes but it had not been broken) and even offer concessions to win peace with defensive Cyre, Krozen and his supporters quickly quashed the plan. A new southern campaign would be commenced—Breland had been weakened by its losses in Darguun. Once again, nationalism and rigidity overwhelmed diplomacy, or even common sense.

In 976, a Thrane offensive pushed south, retaking the buffer zone created by the ceasefire with Breland. King Boranel reacted forcefully, rushing north with an army that included large numbers of newly purchased warforged. The massed Thranes crossed Brey River and recaptured Vathirond, but could move no farther southwest. King Boranel, his personal guard, and the warforged regiments seemed to be everywhere. The losses among the warforged were heavy, but Thrane's army was ultimately forced back beyond Lurching Tower. The battle is most remembered for the personal bravery of Boranel, leading from the front and determined to hold the line against the invaders. In the aftermath, the king's praise for the warforged soldiers was unalloyed. Those few who survived the battle were assigned to his personal guard, and even more Brelish funds were earmarked for House Cannith coffers.

In 978, Thrane's attitude again changed. The Keeper succeeded in negotiating a delicate alliance with Cyre. Although Thrane had pillaged eastern Cyre repeatedly, all Cyrans knew that Karrnath was the true evil. The two nations began preparations for a joint attack north.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

—The PCs are a group of more free-thinking members of a force of warforged and artificers newly in the employ of Breland or Cyre. They must prove themselves to their comrades, survive continual placement in the most dangerous points of conflict, and learn to work as a team.

—For a real change of pace, the characters could form a group of hobgoblin rangers and sorcerers tasked with infiltrating the fortress Veldarren and placing a mystical object at a key point near the control chamber.

Cyre even convinced Aundair to briefly cease operations against Thrane and aid in Karrnath's death blow.

Before the invasion could be launched, however, the new alliance collapsed. A series of minor Brelish raids and troop movements in the south threatened to escalate into a larger conflict. Rather than back down and even withdraw against the Brelish aggression, Thrane's militants demanded that Cyre commit forces to beat back Breland. Cyre had no interest in aiding Thrane against its relatively peaceful eastern neighbor. Queen Dannel's refusal of aid was trumpeted as an unforgivable insult by the most inflexible Cardinals. When Thrane's troops, depleted by the shift of personnel to Thaliost, were forced to abandon Vathirond and withdraw to Arythawn Keep, the denunciations against Cyre were exceedingly harsh. Thrane withdrew its diplomats and military planners from the joint Karrnathi campaign.

Embarrassed by Thrane's abrupt change in stance, Cyre decided to retaliate. A Cyran army, supported by masses of warforged, laid siege to Arythawn Keep in 979. Once the gates fell and the keep was theirs, the Cyrans did not specifically order the warforged to stand down. In an extremely unemotional and mechanical manner—fully compliant with their training—the living constructs massacred the majority of their fleeing enemies, running them down for miles and taking no prisoners. Cyran apologists later insisted that the warforged units were "designed as overly aggressive" by House Cannith, but the damage to the reputations of both Cyre and all warforged was severe.

Sensing Thrane weakness, the Karrnathi navy worked feverishly that winter to build additional troop barges. In the early spring of 980, as soon as the weather on Scions Sound cleared, General Vedim ir'Omik led both living and undead Karrnath legions back to the Shadukar Peninsula. The Karrns overran Olath and besieged Angwar Keep. General Omik held the area for a year, but the siege was ultimately unsuccessful. Despite a small garrison, the Thranes had strong walls and plentiful supplies of courage—no doubt buttressed by fear of a Shadukarlike massacre. In time, the Karrns declared victory and sailed back to Korth.

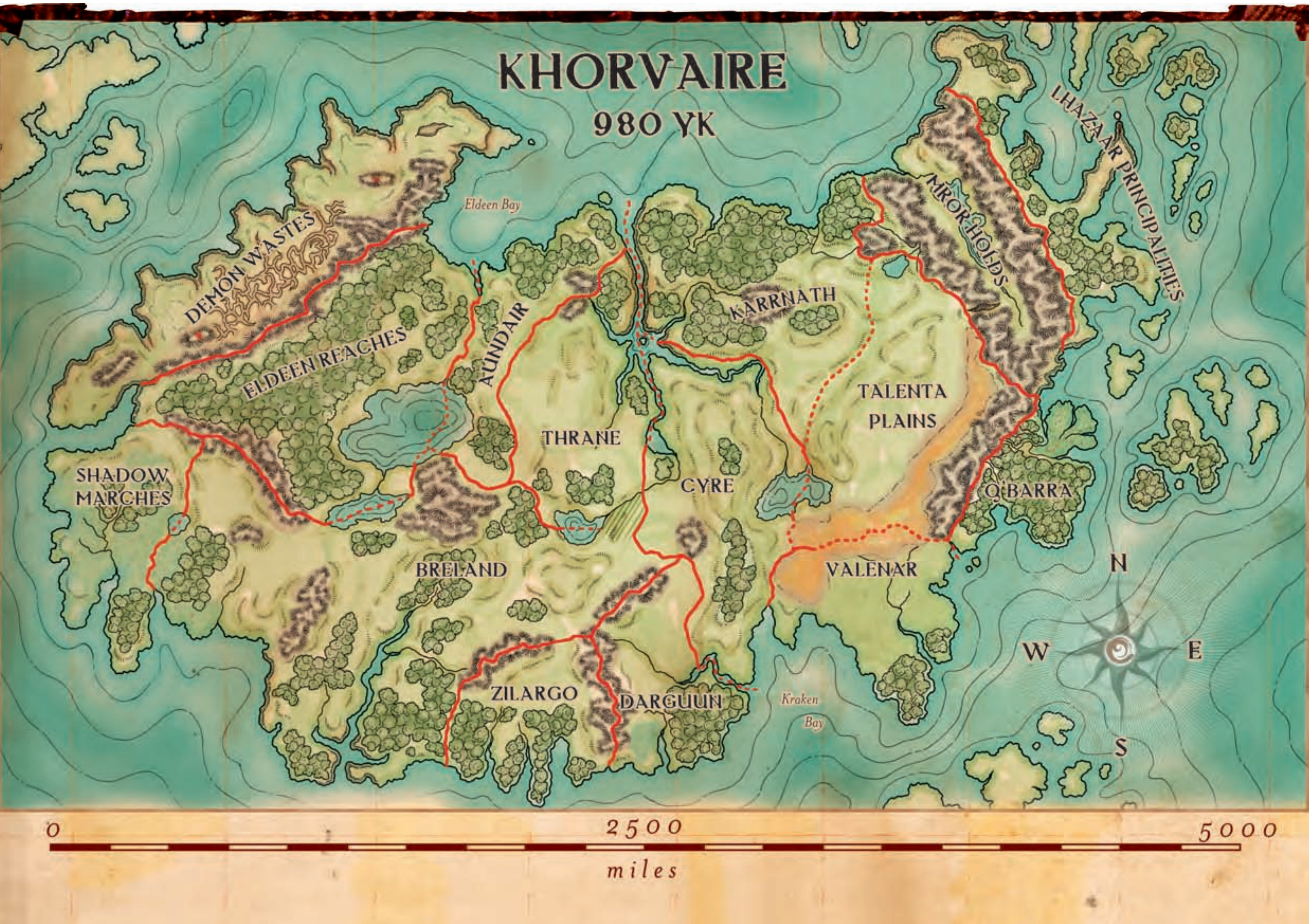
All in all, the years up to 980 proved that any peace with Thrane was exceedingly fragile. Thrane's hard-liners took advantage of this time—and the attacks against their nation—to regroup, reassert themselves, and rail against "sentiments of weakness and concession."

980–992
BRELAND RIVEN

Victory can be had by the swift and focused. Absent quick triumph, however, a robust and well-provisioned foe may overcome a lack of commitment and become a daunting foe.

— Analects of War by Karrn the Conqueror

The last full decades of the war saw Breland rise to a summit of power and influence, only to tumble to its lowest ebb.



The splintering that had plagued Cyre and Aundair earlier would arrive with a vengeance in the south.

980

SUCCESSION AND RETRENCHMENT

In late 979, Queen Barvette of Aundair succumbed to a magical illness. Rumors spread that Emerald Claw assassins had stuck again, perhaps hoping to restore their favor with the Karrnathi monarch. In any event, the transition to power of Barvette's daughter was relatively smooth, and Queen Aurala was crowned in 980. The new queen found herself ruling a nearly ruined country. The sheer attrition of decades of war, plus the long time required to train adepts, magewrights, and other skilled personnel (as well as to raise dragonhawks) meant that replacing losses was difficult, particularly when compared to Thrane's levy infantry or even Karrnathi bone knights. The quality of Aundairian troops and their arcane support was at its lowest ebb.

Aurala's desperation was reflected in her initial actions. She sent envoys to her enemies, seeking a ceasefire. The queen tapped her most skilled and intelligent diplomats and instructed them to, at the very least, delay as long as possible. Meanwhile, Aurala contacted the Lhazaar pirate barons, the Valenar elves, and the Talenta halflings about hiring mercenaries from among their numbers. The queen might even have approached the dragons of Argonnessen and the warlords and abominations of the Demon Wastes. Cyre was dismayed when word spread that Aurala had recognized Valenar's independence as a negotiation ploy in securing the elves' aid.

The actions of Aundair's new royal achieved their results. Over the next several years, Aundairian forces gained time to recover some measure of their morale, expertise, and numbers. The primary cause, however, was cautious generalship. As Cyre, Karrnath, Thrane, and Breland wore out one another with regular assaults, Aundair ceased offensive operations, entrenched, and rebuilt. Aundairian diplomacy mostly bought time—although numerous peace negotiations were started, little was accomplished. In all, Queen Aurala showed herself a wily fox indeed. The "early years of Aurala" are still remembered as a time of relative peace and rebuilding in Aundair.

Perhaps the most enduring alliance during the Last War was that between Aundair and Cyre. From King Wrogar's initial support of Queen Mishann, relations reached a high point when Queen Wrella married Cyran Prince Deggan and bore a son. Still, the long war years frayed and eventually undermined even this friendship. In 958, King Aarott of Aundair renounced his support of Cyre ambitions. Toward the end, Queen Aurala's recognition of Valenar essentially ended cooperation between the countries. Although Aundair sent no troops into battle against Cyre, its rejection of all but a handful of Cyran refuges at war's end showed just how far relations had deteriorated.

982

THRANE'S MESSENGERS

982 brought major conflict to the south. Early that summer, Darguuls under the direct command of Warlord Unndral Ochsesser conducted an ill-advised attempt to seize territory west of the mountains. Marching out by night from Matshuc Zaal, the Stolen Fortress, the goblinoids hoped to slip unnoticed past Brelish lines. Keen-eyed human Brelish Rangers saw the dispersed army, however, and hurried to warn every Brelish legion from Vathirond to Sharn.

Boranel rushed from Wroat, and his army met the goblinoids between the summit of Dargon's Crown and the Faded Forest. The Darguuls were defeated in a classic pincer attack that collapsed both their flanks and captured hundreds. Surprisingly, Boranel tempered his victory with cunning. Rather than hold the goblinoids prisoner, or even slaughter them in an act of vengeance, the king sent negotiators to Lhesh Haruuc. Breland offered the return of the troops in exchange for a secret alliance between Breland and Darguun against Thrane. Boranel's only demand was the removal of Warlord Unndral Ochsesser from power—a demand that Lhesh Haruuc had little difficulty imposing on the disgraced leader.

Taking advantage of Breland's distraction with Darguun and Aundair's continuing retrenchment, Thrane crossed Scions Sound and launched a massive western offensive against Cyre in the summer of 983. This undertaking was spearheaded by a squad of four archons called the Messengers, divine generals who were believed to have arrived in response to Cyran and Karrnathi depredations against Thrane. The archons rallied the Thranes to a degree not seen since the days of the Righteous Kingdom, but they demanded far greater discipline—excesses caused by overzealousness would not be tolerated. The Messengers rode at the forefront of four great armies: the Army of the Ascended, the Righteous Legion, the Legion of True Brethren, and the Army of the Eastern Crusade. Together, these forces totaled over 100,000 soldiers.

The Great Eastern Crusade was a smashing success, capturing Eston's valuable iron and adamantine mines (the city and House Cannith's busy creation forges held out, but in a greatly reduced state). The Thrane legions then seized Kalazart (the city threw open its gates in surrender) and threatened Swoz. Bad weather, long supply lines, and a courageous rear-guard action by Cyre's young General Alvos Brillik forced a halt to operations until the spring.

During the next campaign season, the Messengers secured mysterious goals of their own, involving large trunks laden with books and other items. The Messengers also recovered certain swords, spears, armor, and chalices that were considered holy relics. As a result, on midsummer day 984, the Messengers ordered the four armies to return to Thrane. Despite some resistance from a vocal minority that hoped to occupy Cyran territory permanently, most of the troops turned around and marched back home in time for the harvest. The Legion of True Brethren remained behind to hold the area around Eston until later that winter.

Thrane's retreat from an essentially prostrate Cyre puzzles military historians to this day. Why give up when victory was at hand? Why not hold what was gained? The Messengers never explained, and after they returned to Flamekeep, they vanished forever. The Keeper, the Diet, and the Council of Cardinals refused to answer any questions about the incident, waving it off as a "matter of the interests of the faith and state." A few of the more daring nobles and commanders in Thrane grumble about this retreat, saying that the tragedy of the Mournland would never have occurred if Thrane had simply occupied the Cyran heartland.

985–986

BRELAND FRACTURES

The Messengers' invasion unnerved Breland, because it showed that Cyre was vulnerable and that Thrane was far stronger than anyone suspected. In 985, King Boranel called on the Lhesh to uphold his secret treaty and join an invasion of Thrane. Haruuc kept his word, but the shrewd hobgoblin leader was really just acting in his own interests. In fact, the high warlord was entirely pleased to have his nation treated as an equal and sovereign state; his followers' support stemmed mostly from promises of plunder.

Supplemented by the goblinoids, Breland took the Brey Crossing bridges, seized Castle Rhonewatch in a night assault, and made long-term plans to hold Old Breland; it had been, after all, Brelish land only two generations prior. Brelish troops operated mostly during daylight, while the goblins raided at night—and the combination was too much for the Thrane forces. For almost three years, until the Battle of Cairn Hill, Darguun and Breland secured the area.

In 986, a trio of hags known as the Daughters of Sora Kell arrived in far western Breland. Accompanying them was a army of monsters from their former lands. As they moved east, countless others joined them. The regiments of trolls, ogres, and gnolls overran settlements through the area west of the Graywall Mountains; the limited garrison troops of a distracted Breland proved little opposition. Report even surfaced that detachments of Karrnathi troops, living and undead, were openly attacking Brelish positions and fighting beside the monsters.

That same year, King Boranel championed legislation in the Brelish parliament known as the Warforged Decree, recognizing warforged as sentient beings and granting them the rights afforded to all Brelish citizens. The law was set to take effect upon the cessation of hostilities between all five nations. By emancipating the warforged conditionally, the Decree guaranteed their service for the duration of the war, while providing powerful motivation for them to remain committed to the Brelish cause. As intended, it also attracted warforged from other nations to the Brelish banner.

Finally, 986 starkly revealed an independence that long been poorly concealed. The sea barons of the Lhazaar Principalities, defanged by King Galifar and relatively tame for centuries, had been awakened by the war. During decades of raiding, pirating, smuggling, and pillaging, the princes had been accepting letters of marque from all sides. In 986, however, the powerful Prince Ryger's gathered a unified fleet and began to hunt en masse. The self-proclaimed Wynarn scion proved time and again that his ships could match any "regular" navy. By his deeds and words, Ryger showed that Lhazaar would bend knee to no outsider. From that point on, no body of water was truly secure.

987

BATTLE OF CAIRN HILL

Breland's high point, the occupation of formerly lost lands in Thrane, came to an end in 987 at the battle of Cairn Hill. General Nystrum Shadar of Thrane—later the spymaster of the realm and chief of the Argentum—defeated Breland and its allied Darguuls on the Fields of Rhone, just south of Cairn Hill. The Battle of Cairn Hill is remembered both for its size and because it was fought between two veteran and highly decorated armies. As a result, the intense fighting lasted four days before a result could be determined.

General Shadar's forces included all 1,700 paladins of the Avenging Hand of the Eternal Flame and Cardinal Moctin's Exultant Guards, 1,500 elite heavy foot. The Thrane order of battle also included 22,000 hardened levy spear and axe, 4,000 pike, 6,500 veteran archers, three companies of the Order of the Pure, and an additional 3,300 veteran heavy cavalry. In total, Thrane brought over 38,000 troops to the field.

Breland fielded just as many veterans, including such famous companies as the Grey Geese archers, the Blues & Irons dragoons, and the Roses of Sharn, a company of all-female wands. Their troops also included 600 Rangers, 2,000 dragoons, 2,900 heavy cavalry, 14,000 light and medium foot, 2,500 warforged heavy foot, 6,000 pike, 5,200 magewright-supported veteran archers, 3,000 veteran crossbowmen, and 300 Zilargo mercenary wands. The supporting Darguun mercenaries numbered roughly 5,500 light foot goblins and 2,000 heavily armed and armored hobgoblins and bugbears. Totaling 44,000, the Brelish army actually outnumbered the Thrane levies—a rare event indeed. King Boranel also dispatched Chydris, the first and most celebrated of the floating fortresses.

The battle's first day was spent in skirmish, scouting, and the use of wands and archery. The few clashes were quickly broken up by reinforcements or maneuver. Neither commander seemed ready to commit his troops fully. The second day saw the heavy use of cavalry to strike at perceived weak points.

The next day began well for Breland, with a volley of archery and arcane fire—the latter provided by Chydris, the Zilargo wands, and the Roses of Sharn. The Darguuls acquitted themselves admirably at first, pressing the Thrane lines. Then word spread that Thrane cavalry, riding hard, was threatening the Darguun plunder-laden baggage train. Many goblin irregulars abandoned the line to rush in defense of their loot. This spontaneous retreat drew Chydris and the Brelish pike out of position to cover the right flank. Worse still, a piloting error caused Chydris to plow into the ground as it attempted to quickly shift position. Thrane levies, the Exultant Guards heavy foot, and archers exploited the resulting gaps and succeeded in overrunning the grounded fortress, destroying its delicate control mechanisms and rendering it no more dangerous than a large, hollowed-out rock. Brelish reserves were required just to stave off collapse.

When the sun set, the Thrane cavalry and paladins had been driven away from the baggage train, but the very last Brelish reserves had been committed. That evening, the Brelish and Darguun sides exchanged bitter words. Only a desperate "divided we fall" appeal prevented a massed goblin nighttime retreat. As it was, several thousand goblinoids disappeared into the dark.

The battle continued to the fourth day. The remaining goblins were angry and fought with great spirit, cutting horses out from under Thrane paladins and using oil grenadiers effectively against Thrane pike. But it was not enough—the Brelish command realized that it had insufficient forces to exploit any gains or address any weaknesses. Shortly before noon, the order was given for the Brelish and Darguun forces to withdraw. They did so in good order, and, by direct order of the Keeper, the forces of Thrane declined to follow. This was later proclaimed a gallant gesture, but many say that Thrane's army was so badly bloodied and exhausted that pursuit was nearly impossible.

Breland tried to paint the Battle of Cairn Hill as a victory based on Thrane's casualties, but the loss of Chydris and the sole presence of Thrane forces on the field of battle at the end belie that claim. The defeated armies retreated to Castle Rhonewatch and later to Lurching Tower.

This was Breland's last large-scale invasion of Thrane territory, and also the end of Brelish cooperation with the Darguuls. During the retreat, goblinoid slave-takers dragged along chained lines of Thrane peasant "property." The Brelish demanded that the Darguuls release their human plunder, but they refused to abandon their most valuable chattel. This resulted in a small skirmish, often called the Slave Battle. From that point forward, the two armies marched in different directions.

987

DROAAM LOST

The loss of Old Breland was not the only one King Boranel suffered at this stage. The slow but steady erosion of Breland's western flank was becoming critical. The king decided he could no longer defend the western plains. He ordered Brelish Rangers to escort all human settlers to safety in 987. The bards recount numerous tales of the Rangers' bravery, but their most fantastic yarns concern King Boranel's personal defeat of an ogre champion, which allowed the last sizable group of refugees to escape across the mountains. Troops sealed off the land west of the Graywalls.

With the last of the foreigners captured, killed, or driven off, the Daughters of Sora Kell proclaimed a new state of Droaam. The three hags extended their claws over every nook and cranny of their land. Channeling the monsters' bloodlust, the Daughters commissioned House Tharashk to broker mercenary contracts for the most aggressive. By the war's end, such units could be found among Cyre and Karrnath forces; Aundair used Droaamite mercenaries regularly in the Eldeen Reaches.

988

ENEMIES SHIFT

In an effort to replace the unreliable goblinoids, Breland contacted House Cannith about stepping up the delivery of warforged. King Boranel was politely informed that production was running at full capacity and that the majority of the troops were pledged to Cyre. Although there had been no true hostilities between Breland and Cyre in decades, this news worried Boranel. He decided to seek greater help from House Deneith. The house offered a fairly large number of Valenar elves. Better yet, War Leader Shaeras Vadallia had given his dragonmarked brokers permission to lower the asking price for any country willing to formally recognize Valenar claims to southern Cyre. King Boranel was sorely tempted by the terms—his treasury was significantly depleted. He reasoned that Cyre had made no move to retake the Valenar territory and Queen Dannel's statements on the subject remained ambiguous. Furthermore, Cyre's failure to support Breland's aborted efforts in Darguun or its assault on Thrane showed it was no true friend of Breland. After a great debate with his advisors, the adventurer-king agreed to the Valenar proposal.

Breland's proclamation seriously undermined Queen Dannel. Vadallia pressed Cyre for a final statement on the issue, using highly inflammatory language. Cyre would not concede Valenar independence, but it was still not in a position to invade. In the end, several Valenar warclans remained in Cyran service, but the bulk of Vadallia's elite fighters departed. Brelish–Cyran relations instantly became more tense.

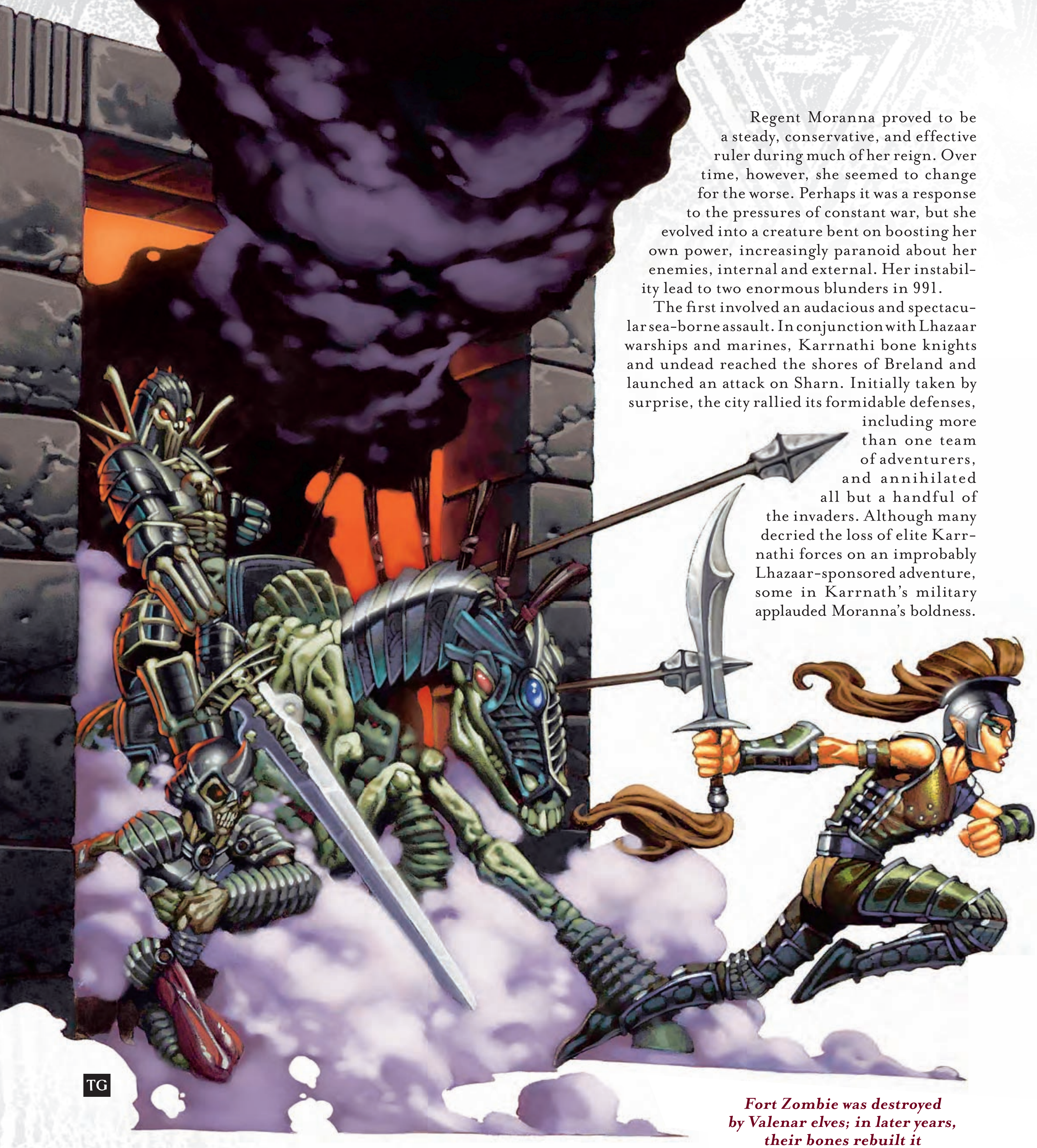
Just as Breland was forced to address its lost Darguun mercenaries, Cyre now cast about for additional troops. Even as warforged warriors continued to pour out of Eston's forges, the generals knew they needed more, particularly if the Valenar shift signaled a new aggressiveness on Breland's part. In a scheme no doubt motivated by revenge, Cyran negotiators were ordered to secure goblinoid fighters from House Deneith. Lhesh Haruuc drove a hard bargain—he, like the elves, wanted national recognition but was mostly unwilling to lower his price. Cyre complained but ultimately paid.

Unwilling to fight Aundair, Cyre, Droaam, and Thrane all at once, King Boranel sought a treaty with one or more to allow him to concentrate on the others. With the loss of the Eldeen Reaches, beleaguered Aundair could offer little in the way of aid. There could be no quarter with the monsters of Droaam. That left Cyre and Thrane as the likely diplomatic targets. Although bloodshed with Thrane was most recent, Cyre's plots were deeply disturbing. When Cyre refused to meet with Brelish negotiators, and Thrane proved more receptive, Boranel pushed forward with the latter. It took time, patience, and heavy-handed tactics by both the king and the Keeper to temper passions caused by the battles in the Cauldron and the loss of Old Breland, but diplomacy actually succeeded. A ceasefire and a pledge of nonhostility was signed with quiet dignity and no small amount of suspicion.

Those Brelish who had supported the peace treaty as a means toward restoring the aristocracy were well pleased with subsequent events. Erivon ir'Wynarn, blood regent of Thrane, died in late 988 of a sudden stroke, and his daughter Diani succeeded him. Since that time, Blood Regent Diani's pronouncements have been far more supportive of Thrane and the Keeper, and far less of the Diet of Cardinals. More than a few inside and outside Thrane argue that the Blood Regent could be convinced, if asked by Thrane nobles and the church, to return to power. Given the statements of High Cardinal Krozen and his supporters, that appears highly unlikely. Still, neither Keeper Tagor nor her successor Keeper Daran has spoken definitively on the subject.

In 989, an experimental House Lyrandar airship crashed a few miles west of Daskaran. An unbound fire elemental razed a nearby forest and two villages before Thrane soldiers destroyed it. The apologetic dragonmarked house made reparations by donating funds to Thrane's war chest. Subsequent tests were far more successful, and in 990, the first elemental airships entered service. They quickly become popular both for reconnaissance and as raiders. Still, their long construction time and high cost meant that their numbers and impact remained small for several years.

Valenar troops, as likely roving the plains looking for battle as working in the employ of Cyre, attacked and raised Fort Bones in 990's Battle of the Long Night. The Captain of Corpses, a particularly bloodthirsty warlord who led the relief column from Fort Zombie, pledged that the elves "and their Cyran paymasters" would regret their actions. For the remainder of the war, the bones of all the elves and humans slain in the area would be used to rebuild the walls.



Regent Moranna proved to be a steady, conservative, and effective ruler during much of her reign. Over time, however, she seemed to change for the worse. Perhaps it was a response to the pressures of constant war, but she evolved into a creature bent on boosting her own power, increasingly paranoid about her enemies, internal and external. Her instability lead to two enormous blunders in 991.

The first involved an audacious and spectacular sea-borne assault. In conjunction with Lhazaar warships and marines, Karrnathi bone knights and undead reached the shores of Breland and launched an attack on Sharn. Initially taken by surprise, the city rallied its formidable defenses, including more than one team of adventurers, and annihilated all but a handful of the invaders. Although many decried the loss of elite Karrnathi forces on an improbably Lhazaar-sponsored adventure, some in Karrnath's military applauded Moranna's boldness.

Fort Zombie was destroyed by Valenar elves; in later years, their bones rebuilt it

990~991

MORANNA'S FOLLIES

For nearly a decade, Karrnath had engaged in only minor battles against Aundair, Thrane, and Cyre, and small-scale raids in the Eldeen Reaches, Breland, and the Talenta Plains. The warlords, though depleted after nearly a century of war, never ceased agitating for glorious conquest and a restoration of honor.

Her next campaign, however, removed all doubt about her fitness to lead.

By late 991, Karrnath's treasury had run dry and, wary of wild expenditures such as payments to Lhazaar, House Kundarak refused to extend further lines of credit. Furious at the news, Regent Moranna decried "the dwarven conspiracy" and turned her ire against the Mror Holds. The Third and Fourth Atur Legions and a group of elite night raiders were ordered to seize several of the largest clan holdings by force. The most aggressive of her warlords volunteered their personal guards, and three actually marched with the troops.

With a core of elite commanders and troops, and a substantial number of tireless undead, the attack might have worked, if Karrnath had kept some element of surprise. Moranna incautiously trumpeted her suspicions and plans, however, allowing the dwarves to prepare well. By the end of the year, a good portion of the undead horde had been destroyed, and the human troops were out of supplies. Very little of the Mror invasion force, and a mere handful of the warlords, returned home.

Her reputation in tatters and her generals threatening rebellion, Regent Moranna could no longer maintain power. Once again in Karrnath's hour of need, a new monarch was brought from hiding, this time ready to assume the throne. It took some time to organize a proper coronation, but in 992, King Kaius III's rule of Karrnath began. The new king displayed remarkable diplomatic acumen by quickly making reparations and restoring ties with the Mror Holds. The king next surprised the nation by marrying Etrigani, an Aerani diplomat who had appeared in his court.

991 also set the grim fort of Orcbone as the site of Droaam's first major incursion east of the mountains. Unlike the attacks that secured the Droaamish heartland, this assault was not carefully planned or controlled. It might be that it was more restlessness on the part of the monsters than instructions from the hags that inspired the attack. In any event, the Westwind Riders and other Brelish defenders, all veterans of the Eldeen campaigns, were ready. Breland repulsed the monsters' march.

992~993

THRANE EMBRACES NEW FLAMES

Thrane had spent long decades debating whether constructs truly could be worshipers and obedient to the Keeper's authority. As on many other issues, the Diet of Cardinals was split—supporters of the aged Keeper Tagor in favor of inclusion but unwilling to directly challenge Cardinal Krozen's opposition.

In 992, the Diet decided that Thrane's need for more troops overshadowed any theological quandary. Its war chest depleted, Thrane somehow gathered the funds to purchase hundreds of warforged soldiers and incorporate them into its armies on an unprecedented scale. At Keeper Tagor's urging, the living constructs were exempt from long-standing policies requiring soldiers to attend Silver Flame services. Perhaps because their conversions were never forced, many of Thrane's warforged became quite devout.

This shift in warforged treatment, if not doctrine, would be the last major event of Keeper Tagor's service. After almost sixty years at the forefront of the Light, the ancient cleric passed away in 993. The Voice of the Silver Flame almost immediately called Jaela Daran as the Thirteenth Keeper of the Flame. As is the case with most new Keepers, the preternaturally self-possessed six-year-old had no difficulty assuming power. She immediately sued for peace with Queen Dannel of Cyre, hoping to repair the damage wrought in the failed alliance against Karrnath. Not surprisingly, her overtures were rebuffed. The queen's generals, led by the bold Alvos Brillik, were convinced that Cyre could destroy Thrane with an overwhelming naval invasion of Flamekeep, the heart of Thrane's faith.

Cyre's overambitious and unrealistic plans were leaked to Thrane, and they were never executed. Still, Keeper Daran had no counter to High Cardinal Krozen's claim that Cyre was an active and present danger. Queen Dannel remained the sole royal who regularly asserted her claim to the crown of Galifar.

994~996

THE DEATH OF CYRE

Once he is shown to be intractable, a wise ruler allows his enemies no means of retreat or surrender. Only utter destruction prevents a foe from rising again.

—Analects of War by Karrn the Conqueror

Even before the Day of Mourning, signs and portents of the disaster to come abounded. Unnatural foes appeared on long-bloodied battlefields. Strange mists gathered in lowlands. Odd noises plagued soldiers' sleep. Then, two weeks before the event, many diviners and oracles actually lost their voices or their sight; one of the Prophets of the Tower in Sharn was said to have gone mad. Still, no one understood what was coming until too late.

994

THE LAST BATTLE

In mid-994, Cyre launched a deep-strike invasion of Karrnath aimed at the undead-producing crypts of Atur. Dodging around Deneith-protected Karrlakton, a large Cyran army conducted a furious assault that left the city in ruins. Unwilling to get bogged down once again in

ADVENTURE SEEDS

—A group of war-weary Brelish Ranger veterans, convalescing in Droaam and assigned to train a group of raw recruits, suddenly find themselves facing increased raids and distressingly unified monsters. Can the PCs and their young charges survive the long trek to safety?

—Serving as elite Thrane troops, the PCs are called into the presence of the august Messengers. They are given a prestigious and highly dangerous assignment to retrieve an artifact buried in goblinoid ruins located in the mountains north of Kennrun. The Messengers promise to distract the Cyran regulars between Thrane's armies and the mountains. The party must handle whatever guardians, living or dead, protect the ancient site.

Karrnath, the invaders quickly reversed their march and returned home. With a hastily gathered and vengeful army of Karrns at their heels, the troops crossed over Scions Sound and pulled back toward Metrol. Significant Karrnathi forces gathered in pursuit, and a sizable conflict began developing in northern Cyre. This left few regular soldiers to protect Metrol, the Cauldron, and the lands to the south.

Meanwhile, the recent Thrane and Brelish pact remained strong, and skirmishes along their mutual borders were nearly nonexistent. The two countries stepped up relations and plotted a joint invasion of Cyre. In a measure either of good faith or of brinkmanship, Breland offered the leadership of King Boranel's renowned warrior-daughter, Princess Borann, and Thrane countered with Bishop-Militant Gradon, a close ally and personal friend of High Cardinal Krozen. Marching south of the usual battlefields in western Cyre, the vanguard of the Brelish–Thrane army quickly overwhelmed Kennrun and surged across northern Draguun. Advance forces reached the place now called the Field of Ruins. There, the invaders paused to await the bulk of their troops before shifting northeast to storm Making.

The next day, the main body of Thrane and Brelish forces climbed up through the gullies and gorges to higher ground, and cut the Saerun Road some 200 miles southwest of Making. The invaders numbered over 30,000, including 2,000 Crown Knights and other heavy cavalry, 2,000 heavy pike, 4,000 regular foot, and 6,000 peasant levies on the Thrane side. The Brelish army featured 5,000 Brelish First Dragoons of Wroat, 1,500 heavy cavalry, 2,000 heavy foot (commanded by the renowned warforged Bastion), 3,000 Brelish Rangers and other skirmishers, 2,500 archers, 2,000 Zil wands, and 3,000 Valenar cavalry. Through a series of quick hit-and-run maneuvers using the tireless warforged, the vastly outnumbered Cyran defenders gave the impression of being a much larger force. This illusion, and the command and control problems it caused between the invading allies, slowed the advance significantly. Given impossible orders to delay and yet preserve as much of their forces as possible, the Cyrans performed brilliantly.

On the second day, Cyran reinforcements from the east made the battle more even. The Cyrans held the road north with an army numbering perhaps 5,000 light foot and archers, 9,000 heavy foot veterans (mostly warforged), 2,000 light cavalry, roughly 1,400 untested Jarp hussars and wands, and a detachment of 3,500 hardened Darguun mercenaries.

Although outnumbered, the Cyrans were defending familiar terrain. Late in the afternoon, their battle lines were holding, and the outcome of the struggle was still in doubt. Suddenly, the sky caught fire and deep fogs gathered. Generalship, morale, strategy, and tactics—all was useless that day. The conflagration that enveloped the field was so bright that it blinded soldiers at Angwar Keep—over the horizon and half a continent away. Both sides died equally on the Day of Mourning.

The devastation was not limited to the battlefield on the Saerun Road—what is now the Field of Ruins. The rolling hills to the east of the battlefield became a plateau of jagged glass. To the north, a chasm opened in the earth, glowing with a cold purple light. A choking fog erupted in cities across central Cyre, killing every living thing it touched as it expanded to define the current borders of the Mournland. Not all of Cyre's holdings were swallowed in the dead-gray mist—parts of Valenar, Darguun, and the Talenta Plains were still under Cyran rule at the time—but Cyre as a nation ceased to exist.

Scant thousands of Cyrans living at the edges of the devastation managed to flee to safety, and Cyrans who were traveling or living abroad at the time were of course spared. Many of these survivors have flocked to eastern Breland in the years since the Mourning, gathering under the banner of Prince Oargev, the son of the late Queen Dannel. Oargev was serving as an ambassador to Breland on the Day of Mourning, and now plays the role of a king in exile.

The response to the Cyrans' plight after the Mourning is one of the greatest indictments of Khorvaire's "humanity." Although some did extend a hand to those in need, war had so hardened the hearts of the citizenry that most refugees were turned away. Far more perished in the days after the Mourning than should have.

When the extent of the destruction became clear, King Boranel, wracked with guilt about his possible role in the cataclysm, was the first to allow unarmed refugees to pass through his lines. He eventually granted Prince Oargev and his people "temporary" lands south of Starilaskur and west of Kennrun, in the shadow of the gray mists that had overrun their homeland. No other nation was as charitable. Keeper Daran spoke movingly about the faithful accepting and providing for the dispossessed, and the substantial aid provided by the Purified since the end of the war has gone some way in helping that church's reputation, but the hard-liners in Thrane roused the populace with stories of Cyran depredations and kept the bulk of the refugees out. Aundair, Karrnath, Zilargo, and Q'barra established small communities, but again no significant action was taken. The ruthless Valenar elves slaughtered all who approached their lands; the goblinoids were no more forgiving.

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THE TREATY OF THRONEHOLD

Armies of all nations halted offensive operations as word of the disaster in Cyre spread. A growing wave of refugees threatened to overwhelm Cyre's neighbors. Although the panic began to subside when the mists halted at the former Cyran border, the proud, powerful, ancient nation of Cyre had ceased to exist.

These events lifted the diplomatic stalemate, and negotiation by all sides increased significantly. Still, given more than a hundred years of war, even the cataclysmic events in Cyre might not have guaranteed an end to hostilities. As it turned out, a confluence of circumstances and leaders made peace possible despite the monumental barriers.

King Boranel of Breland, shocked by the devastation and distraught at his daughter's death, greatly desired a pause in fighting. Speaker Daran of Thrane exerted as much influence as she could in favor of peace, and High Cardinal Krozen and his supporters did not resist; in truth, Thrane was spent. Queen Aurala of Aundair had a long history of skillful diplomacy, and she was anxious to shift the conflict from the fields of battle to the tables of negotiation (where she felt she could dominate). Finally, and most surprisingly, the old nemesis of negotiation—Karrnath—turned out to be a strong proponent for peace.

The newest royal, Kaius III, advanced a comprehensive plan for the withdrawal of forces and establishment of new boundaries, including the recognition of several independent nations. As a measure of his good faith, Kaius included the former Karrnathi holding, the Mror Holds, among those new lands. King Boranel offered the moving fortress Argonth as a means to ferry diplomats to summits, and pledged that all who accepted such transport would be safe. Immediately thereafter, the initial group of passengers, a team of Thrane negotiators, were slaughtered in a particularly gruesome manner. As it turned out, this setback actually aided the peace process. The heroic actions of a King's Citadel investigator and the renowned paladin of the Silver Flame, Sir Valen Kelain, revealed that the responsible parties were war-mongering agitators from both the Brelish security force and the Thrane delegation. These horrific deeds severely undermined warmongering forces in both nations.

By 996, real negotiations began at Thronehold, the site where the war had begun. Working from Kaius III's proposal, the participants soon agreed to recognize Aundair, Breland, Thrane, Karrnath, the Talenta Plains, Zilargo, Q'barra, the Lhazaar Principalities, the Mror Holds, the Eldeen Reaches, Darguun, and Valenar as sovereign nations. When the question of Cyre arose, Queen Aurala gave voice to a widespread sentiment: "Cyre no longer exists."

The delegates further reaffirmed House Deneith's role as an international police force and granted it full authority to preserve Thronehold. King Boranel's tenacity and charisma led to one minor Brelish victory (no formal recognition of Droaam) and one major provision (the emancipation of the warforged). King Kaius III's dedication to peace showed when he continued to exert his considerable force of personality at the peace table, despite a desperate famine that struck his country that year. He was later rewarded when both Breland and the Eldeen Reaches offered food to his beleaguered population. The major disputes involved Aundair and Thrane. Queen Aurala demanded the return of Thaliost but was unwilling to concede prewar Thrane lands now safely behind her towers in the east. Thrane, of course, held the opposite stance. In the end, it was Boranel who brought the two sides together by first raising the issue of Old Breland, and then allowing himself to be talked away from its return if Aundair and Thrane essentially agreed to the status quo. The concessions on all sides were ultimately acknowledgments on paper of what had been true for almost seventy years on the ground.

The peace was neither universal nor complete. Minor skirmishes and raids continued as the countries slowly demobilized. Thrane and Aundair exchanged harsh words over Thaliost in 997 and again in 998. Still, the other nations made it clear they would not support Aundair, and Queen Aurala backed down both times. By 998, peace was established, if not entire secure.

THE AFTERMATH

The most important wartime preparations occur during the cessation of hostilities. War—the ultimate pursuit of a people—never entirely ends.
— Analects of War by Karrn the Conqueror

The empire of Galifar was finally and truly gone. What would replace it was up to the new nations birthed in the Last War. The blade of Galifar, soundly shattered, will most likely never be reforged.

Each of the Five Nations lost much, and none could point to truly meaningful gain from all the years of sacrifice and bloodshed. Still, each one appears to be laying the groundwork for the next great conflict. Whether such preparations precipitate a conflagration, as happened in the late 800s, or allow for a lasting peace depends on the lessons learned in the forge of war.

One hopes that the Last War taught all nations that continental bloodshed solves no problems. It is far easier to identify the losers of that great crisis than it is to claim any winners.

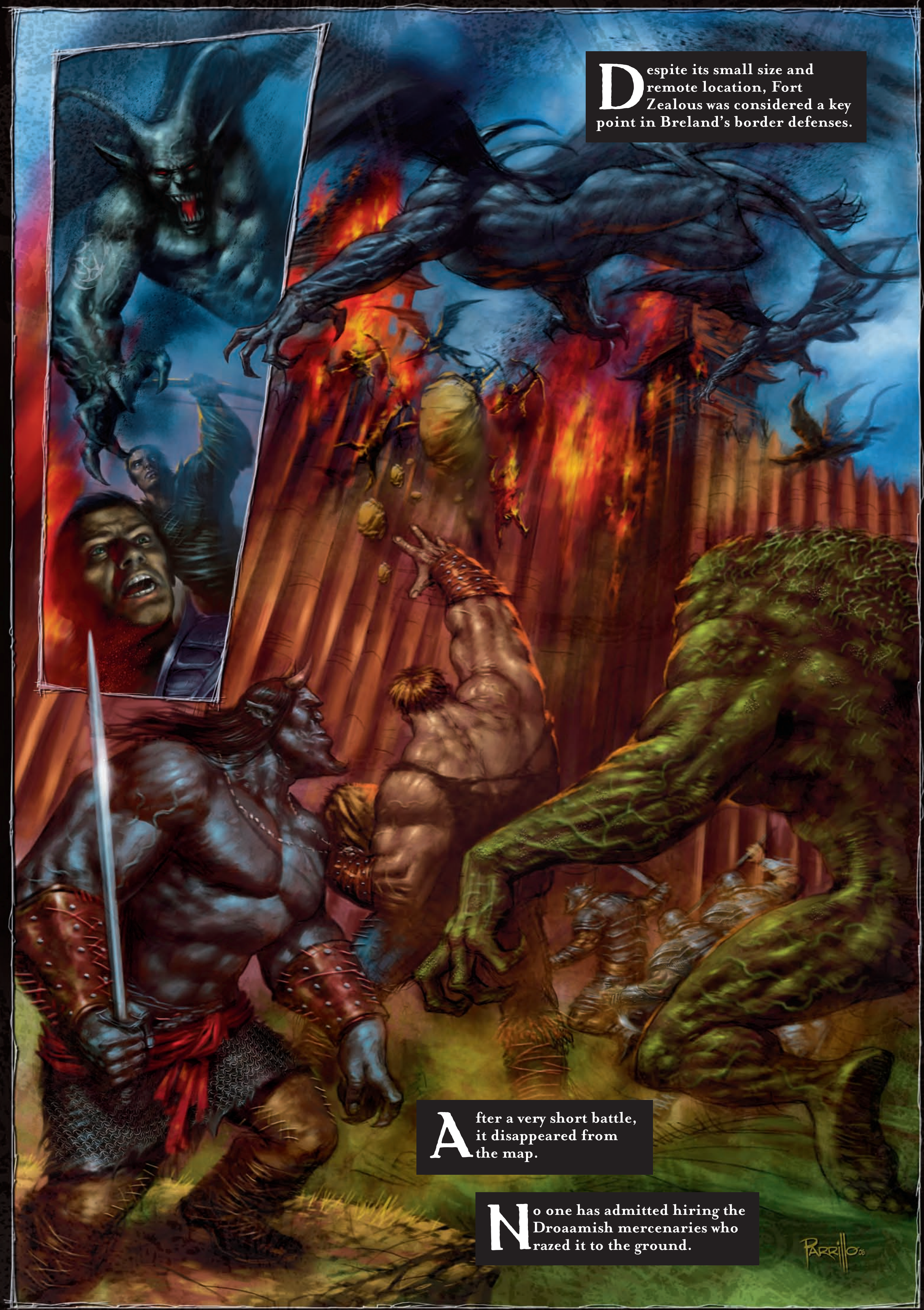
Karrnath began the war unified and strong. It had the greatest military tradition and the most renowned warriors. Its territorial losses in the war were minor compared to other nations, but the independence of the Mror Holds and the Talenta Plains did deprive it of significant resources. The most important change was in the nation's soul. By abandoning itself, at least initially, to the Blood of Vol and the Order of the Emerald Claw, Karrnath bathed in necromancy. Its greatest triumphs on the battlefield did little to enhance its military tradition since they were, in part, due to massed undead and more often than not followed by horrific pillage and slaughter. Karrnath's postwar challenge is to restore its honor.

Prewar Thrane boasted a massive population and an abundance of fertile land to support it. During the war, it claimed divine guidance through the Church of the Silver Flame. Tragically, its faith and its plenty inspired it to the summit of folly. The religious fervor that swept Keeper Serrain into power featured rigid intolerance and inspired absurd blood-soaked aggression. In the end, Keeper Daran has followed her predecessor in returning the church to strong but compassionate ideals. Still, Thrane's war effort starkly shows the dark side of zealotry. Its actions, up to and including the rejection of Cyran refugees, have placed a gloom about the Silver Flame that might never be overcome.

Aundair was devastated by the war. More than half of its prewar territories were lost when the Eldeen Reaches seceded and Thrane took Thaliost. Conquests in Karrnath were erased by war's end, and depredations in the south soiled its reputation. From a bright and shining example of spirit, skill, and mystical prowess, Aundair was beaten down until it was forced to rely in the main on intrigue and diplomacy. The addition of lands east of Lake Galifar are some comfort, but the nation knows that its lack of natural resources render it outmatched in any war of attrition. Though it grieves and agitates for lost Thaliost, it can do little to redress this grievance.

Breland largely considered itself a land apart at the beginning of the war, and it maintained that attitude nearly throughout. Although a great champion of individual rights and national honor, Breland bestirred itself to action only infrequently, even in the face of depredations by the other nations. It also proved a poor ally, switching sides between Thrane and Cyre throughout the war. Most tragically, the war might have visited on King Boranel the affliction of his father—a broken heart. He grieves for his lost relations, and he cannot shake the thought that his army's massive push against Cyre could have been the principal trigger of the Mourning. Given questions surrounding the aged King Boranel's succession, Brelish isolation has again become fashionable.

As for the light and beauty of Cyre, all was lost. The shattered kingdom remains only as a hope and a dream in countless displaced refugees, scratching out a living in foreign lands. They are, at best, tolerated, and realize that they can find acceptance in their new homes only by abandoning their heritage. Unadulterated pride on the part of Cyre no doubt prolonged the war, raising continual fears about its monarch's claim to the empire. Still, Cyre's claims were no more outlandish than others, and bore the sanction of tradition. Moreover, Cyran actions during the war rarely dragged that nation's honor through the mire, as was the case with many others. With so much lost and so little to call its own, Cyre is essentially ignored by the surviving nations in their games of politics and intrigue. That might ultimately prove their greatest mistake.


Despite its small size and remote location, Fort Zealous was considered a key point in Breland's border defenses.
After a very short battle, it disappeared from the map.
No one has admitted hiring the Droaamish mercenaries who razed it to the ground.
PARRILLO 08

CHAPTER TWO

A GUIDE TO THE LAST WAR

This chapter is organized into entries similar to those you might find in an encyclopedia, coving topics related to the nations, armies, sites, factions, and events of the Last War, from Argonth to Warforged. All of this information is intended to be useful in any EBERRON campaign, whether it's set during the Last War or simply dealing with its aftermath.

Players won't find a lot of game-mechanics elements in this chapter. Most of that kind of material appears in Chapter Three: Heroes of the Last War. Even so, the material here is highly useful. Playing a warforged? Check the thematic essay on the role of warforged in the Last War (page 100) for great background on your character. Was your character in the Brelish army? The entry on the armies of Breland (page 49) will tell you what your unit might have been like. Are you a scion of House Cannith? The entry on your house (page 64) covers what you might have done during the war. When you are done here, head on over to Chapter Three for more information you can use to flesh out your character.

If you're the Dungeon Master for an EBERRON game, you'll find great inspiration and concrete adventure-building help in this chapter. Want to send your characters into Argonth to solve a mysterious murder? You'll appreciate the fortress's cross-section illustration (page 46). Need an insidious Emerald Claw plot for your players to foil? Read about the *eldritch machine* in the Shavarath entry (page 90). All the armies entries provide ready-built encounters with military units, and the sections describing specific sites are all great adventure locales. DMs also have all the resources of Chapter Four: The Last War Campaign to draw from.

ARGONTH

The enormous mobile fortress known as Argonth was considered one of the masterpieces of Cannith magecraft and Brelish ingenuity during the early part of the war. Predating the first airships by eighty years, Argonth and its kin gave Breland the capability to move large forces at a relatively high speed to virtually any position along its borders. Although the crawl of a mobile fortress is not vastly different from the speed of a marching army in the short term, it can move without ceasing for weeks at a time, making it far more efficient for troop transport.

TOWN ON THE MOVE

Argonth maintains a constant population of roughly 1,600 soldiers, healers, cooks, smiths, innkeepers, grooms, and other support personnel. This sizable population lives in what resembles a tiny slice of a larger city supported on the stern portion of the floating fortress.

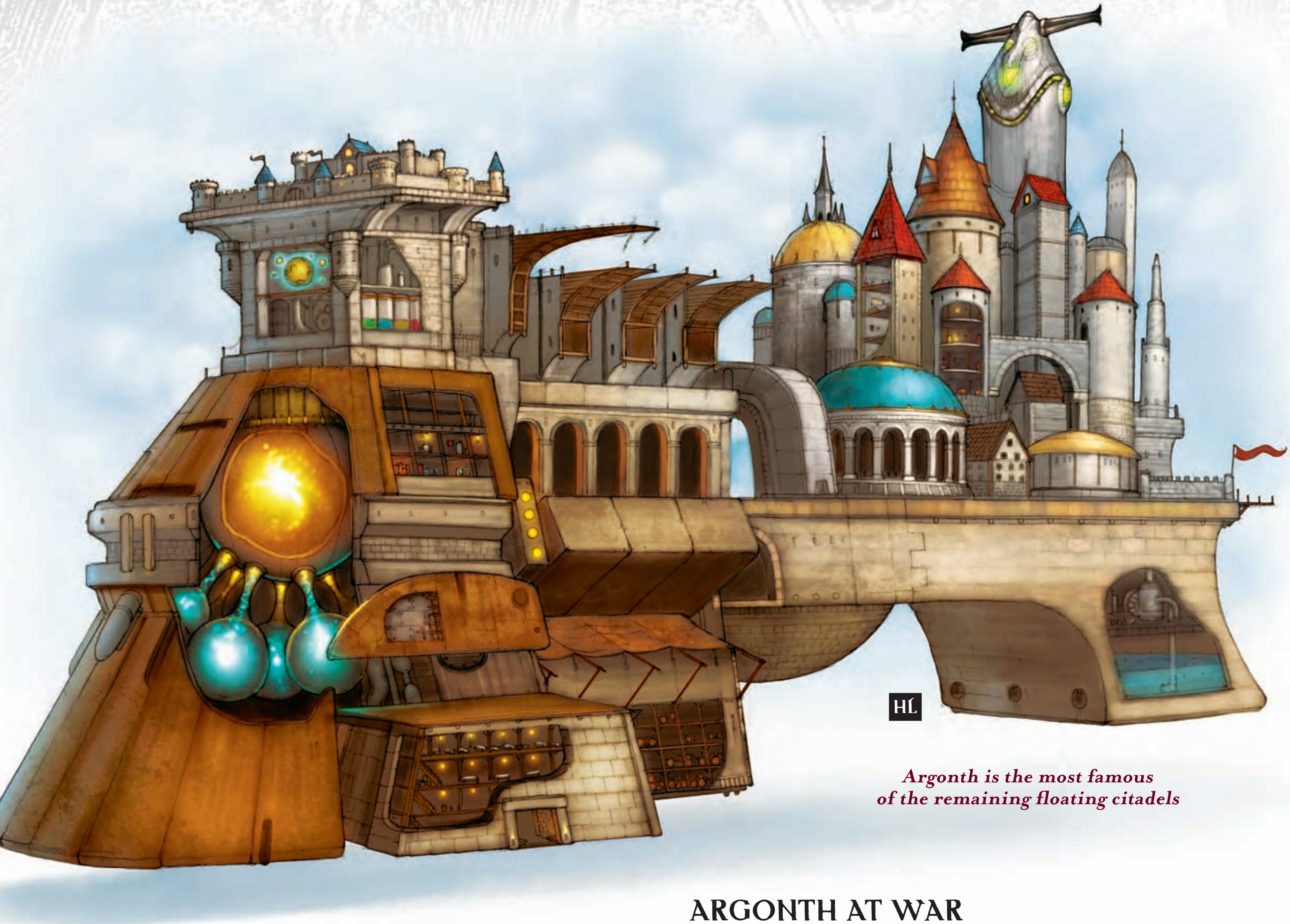
The bow of Argonth contains the magical engines that levitate the fortress and propel it forward. As with airships and the lightning rail, harnessed elementals bound into Khyber dragonshards provide this motive power. In Argonth's case, however, three separate elementals are bound—an air elemental, a fire elemental, and an earth elemental. Unlike on an airship, these elementals are not visible from the outside. Unlike the lightning rail, Argonth is not dependent on conductor stones.

A team of pilots must devote constant attention to control the course of Argonth. The fortress does not rely on dragonmarked pilots the way other elemental vehicles do—the pilots are loyal only to Breland. Increasing the fortress's speed demands more human attention and puts undue strain on its construction, so Argonth moves at about two miles per hour most of the time. Once during

OPTIONAL CLASSES

Several of the characters mentioned throughout this chapter have levels in classes from sources outside the core rules and the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*. If you are not making use of these optional sources, consider the following substitutions.

Beguiler$^{\text{PH2}}$: Enchanter or illusionist.
Dread necromancer$^{\text{HH}}$: Necromancer.
Duskblade$^{\text{PH2}}$: Multiclass fighter/sorcerer.
Knight$^{\text{PH2}}$: Fighter.
Marshal$^{\text{MH}}$: Multiclass cleric/fighter.
Scout$^{\text{CAd}}$: Ranger.
Spellthief$^{\text{CAd}}$: Multiclass rogue/sorcerer.
Truenamer$^{\text{ToM}}$: Wizard.
Warmage$^{\text{CAr}}$: Evoker.



Argonth is the most famous of the remaining floating citadels

the war, Argonth sustained a speed of ten miles per hour for nearly two days traveling from Lurching Tower to Cragwar to respond to an attack. However, three pilots died from overexertion on that journey.

Roughly 90% of Argonth's population is combat-ready, with 10% serving purely support roles. This high "tooth-to-tail" ratio is important when Argonth enters combat, ensuring that most of the people in harm's way are trained military personnel. Because the support population is relatively small, a busy marketplace springs up around Argonth whenever it stops to resupply, which it does at each of the major forts along Breland's border.

The stern of the fortress provides living quarters for Argonth's population. Despite its relatively small size, it resembles a slice of one of Sharn's soaring towers. Cannith Tower is the tallest protrusion on Argonth's back, featuring apartments for the commanding officers at the top and barracks in the lower levels.

The hull of Argonth floats about 30 feet above the ground. A section of the bow can be lowered to the ground to admit and discharge passengers. The bow is heavily armored and can hold as many as 2,000 people in an emergency. The base of the stern is a full 100 feet in the air, protecting the towers and buildings of the village from any ground-based attack. When the fortress comes under attack, the stern is evacuated, soldiers are deployed to meet the attack, and noncombat personnel take shelter in the fortified bow.

ARGONTH AT WAR

The first mobile fortress entered service in 912, with the appearance of the citadel Chydris. Over the next thirty years, Sharn produced four more mobile fortresses, and the Brelish army put them to work, moving them where they were needed. Some supported Breland's campaigns against its neighbors, while others were assigned to protect the borders against incursions.

The last and greatest of the mobile fortresses was Veldarren, commissioned in 970. As its first mission, it traveled to Marguul Pass to quell the goblin rebellion that had declared Darguun an independent state. Even this awesome fortress could not turn the tide of battle in Breland's favor, however, and Veldarren fell to the goblins. Its toppled husk still lies in the pass. It is now called Matshuc Zaal, and it forms an important part of Darguun's defenses.

The fall of Veldarren was a serious blow both to Breland's military capabilities and to its national pride. At least partly as a result of the Battle of Marguul Pass, no new mobile fortresses were produced. During the remainder of the war, Chydris was lost in the Battle of Cairn Hill and Ursa was decommissioned (rushed into the field, this fortress suffered from cripplingly poor craftsmanship). Argonth is one of the two survivors, and by far the better known.

Forces of Argonth

The soldiers posted to Argonth include a full legion—an infantry regiment, a regiment of archers, and a cavalry regiment (see Armies of Breland, page 49). The commander of the Argonth Legion is Field Marshal Alain ir'Ranek (LG male human paladin 7), who also carries the title of Captain of Argonth. Alain is assisted by Colonel Devra ir'Lashan (LN female fighter 6), who is a member of the King's Citadel in addition to her post with the Argonth Legion. Devra commands a dozen agents of the King's Swords, Wands, and Dark Lanterns stationed in the floating fortress.

In addition to the Argonth Legion and the agents of the Citadel, four bands of Brelish Rangers are permanently assigned to Argonth.

EL 7: One of the bands of Brelish Rangers, called Bara's Breakers after its commander, Big Bara, is notable in that fully half of its members are warforged.

Big Bara: LN female personality warforged ranger 3.
Wand: human sorcerer 1.
Artificer: warforged artificer 1.
Warforged Volunteers (4): warforged fighter 1.
Volunteers (4): human fighter 1.

ARGONTH TODAY

Since the end of the Last War, Argonth has become an element of Breland's border patrol, traversing a route of nearly 4,500 miles from Shadowlock Keep in the west (near Droaam) to Sterngate Keep in the east (near Darguun). This route is defined by the network of permanent fortresses that range along Breland's border, in combination with the mountain ranges and lakes that help define that border.

From Shadowlock Keep, Argonth stays to the east of the Graywall Mountains, follows the road west of Ardev, and then heads north at the Droaamish border to Orcbone. Its route continues to the edge of Silver Lake, passing through Shavalant, until it reaches the Xandrar Road, which it follows as far as Drum Keep. Unless there is a particular reason for Argonth to visit Xandrar, it turns around and rides the road south of the Blackcaps as far as Cragwar, hugs the northern edge of the Greenhaunt, and stops at Sword Keep. From there it skirts the southern coast of Lake Brey, passing outside Starilaskur, and tracks the Brey River northeast to Lurching Tower and then Brey Crossing. It follows the Brey River until it reaches the dead-gray mists of the Mournland, then turns southward, keeping a careful watch along that border as far as Kennrun. From Kennrun, Argonth chases the road through New Cyre to Sterngate, where it turns around and reverses its route.

Argonth normally takes about six months to complete one circuit (from one end of the route to the other and back again), so it stops at any site along the way four times a year. Usually, it leaves Shadowlock Keep near the start of summer and again the start of winter, but its timing can vary.

THE ROUTE OF ARGONTH

Shadowlock Keep to Orcbone, 850 miles (2-1/2 weeks)
Orcbone to Drum Keep, 300 miles (1 week)
Drum Keep to Sword Keep, 1,200 miles (3-1/2 weeks)
Sword Keep to Lurching Tower, 575 miles (2 weeks)
Lurching Tower to Kennrun, 960 miles (3 weeks)
Kennrun to Sterngate, 580 miles (2 weeks)

(Travel times are approximate and include brief layovers at each location.)

THE SISTER CITY

Argonth's twin, Dejarn, has played a very different role since the end of the Last War. The mission of Argonth is relatively public and its route is well established, but Dejarn moves about in secret, and its purpose is a mystery. Some say that it is a mobile citadel for the King's Citadel, and the Dark Lanterns in particular, used to transport paramilitary troops, hold prisoners for interrogation, and otherwise conduct operations out of the public eye. Others suggest that House Cannith purchased the fortress back from Breland, and Baron Merrix d'Cannith uses it for his own secret research. A related theory holds that a renegade faction of House Cannith has teamed with nobles and officers of Breland to develop new military technology that will guarantee Breland's superiority when war, inevitably, breaks out afresh in Khorvaire. Those few who know the truth of Dejarn's mission are certainly not telling, but sightings of the mysterious fortress always lead to new rumors.

ARMIES OF AUNDAIR

Bolstered by the magical might of the Arcane Congress, the military forces of Aundair are far more than a ragtag militia of farmers. The common troops are better trained—and far more determined—than their enemies usually give them credit for. Put together, the Knights Arcane and the diehard foot soldiers of Aundair remain a significant military force to be reckoned with.

Aundairians are prone to claim that they would never have given up fighting the war had it not been for the Treaty of Thronehold, asserting that the war would certainly have been theirs by virtue of grim determination if nothing else. "Queen Aurala may have surrendered," they are apt to say, "but my neighbors and I would have fought to the death to defend our lands."

Indeed, none of the Five Nations seems as eager to reawaken the war as Aundair. The loss of the Thaliost region to Thrane remains a bitter blow, and many Aundairians long to see the nation reclaim what they see as rightly theirs.

MILITARY STRUCTURE

The military forces of Aundair are concentrated in small, mobile units designed to get where they could be most effective, strike fast and hard, and get out alive. The cavalry units of Aundair are more like mounted infantry—ready to deal one good blow with a spear from horseback, then dismount to fight on foot before remounting to retreat or move to another area of the battlefield. The knight phantoms (see below) are the epitome of this idea, using magical *phantom steeds* to travel with amazing speed before fighting on foot with sword and spell.

Infantry

Most of Aundair's infantry consists of determined and reasonably well-trained farmers. Recruits who survive a few battles and professional soldiers are trained as archers or cavalry, or assigned to provide support to an arcane ballista.

A standard infantry platoon consists of two militia squads and one archer squad, with a 3rd-level duskblade^{PH2} captain in command. An arcane platoon replaces the archer squad with an arcane squad; a ballista platoon replaces the same with an arcane ballista squad. The captains in charge of both kinds of platoons are 6th-level duskblades.

An infantry company consists of three standard infantry platoons, and an arcane company is made up of two arcane platoons and one ballista platoon. A major, usually a 5th-level duskblade (or a 7th-level duskblade for an arcane company), commands the company.

A regiment consists of three companies, usually two infantry companies and either an arcane company or a cavalry company. The commander of a regiment is a colonel, an 8th-level duskblade.

A brigade consists of 2 regiments with a general in command, usually a 9th-level duskblade.

EL 5: Militia squads are composed of volunteer recruits, with a magewright providing some artillery support with an *eternal wand* (usually casting *magic missile* or *burning hands*) and a regular soldier in command.

Sergeant: human fighter 1.
Artillerist: human magewright 1.
Recruits (9): human commoner 1.

EL 6: Archer squads consist of longbow-wielding professional soldiers, magewright support, and a sergeant.

Sergeant: human duskblade 2 or fighter 1/sorcerer 1.
Artillerist: human magewright 2.
Regular Archers (10): human warrior 1.

EL 8: Arcane squads include archers and wand-wielding magewrights, led by a competent sergeant.

Duskblade Sergeant: human duskblade 4 or fighter 2/sorcerer 2.
Artillerists (5): human magewright 3.
Archers (6): human warrior 2.

EL 9: Built around the terrifying power of an arcane ballista, these units consist of the animated siege engine itself, an artificer commander to operate it, and well-trained soldiers to protect it.

Artillerist Sergeant: human artificer 6.
Arcane Ballista: see page 149.
Elite Soldiers (10): human fighter 1.

Cavalry

A cavalry platoon consists of two light cavalry squads, with a major, usually a 4th-level duskblade^PH2^, in command. A cavalry company, commanded by a 5th-level duskblade colonel, is made up of two cavalry platoons.

EL 9: Light cavalry squads consist of warriors on light warhorses, led by a sergeant.

Cavalry Sergeant: human duskblade 3 or fighter 1/sorcerer 2.
Regular Cavalry (10): human warrior 2.
Magebred Light Warhorses (11): MM 274, *ECS* 295 (swift breed).

Common Tactics

Its emphasis on small, maneuverable units of soldiers and fast-moving cavalry serve Aundair well. These forces are often able to outflank, outmaneuver, and outthink opposing forces—except in the Eldeen Reaches, where the guerrilla tactics of the secessionists took Aundairian theories one step further. Certainly, against the lumbering might of Karrnath's hordes, Aundair's lighter forces make up in maneuverability what they lack in sheer power.

The use of duskblades^{PH2} and multiclass fighter/wizards as commanders in much of the Aundairian army ensures that virtually every unit on the battlefield has access to some magic to help protect the soldiers or harm the enemy. Aundair also makes the heaviest use of magewrights armed with *eternal wands* as well as magical heavy artillery.

Aundair's greatest asset, however, might be the determination of its soldiers, mostly commoner volunteers who enlist to defend their homes from what they perceive as foreign domination. Aundair's soldiers are said to have higher morale than anyone else on the field, except perhaps the warforged and, of course, the undead troops of Karrnath.

ELITE UNITS

Aundair's best soldiers bring a combination of warrior prowess and magical might to the battlefield.

Knights Arcane

The best of Aundair's best are the Knights Arcane, an elite knightly order of soldiers boasting both martial skills and spellcasting ability. The Knights Arcane are a small order, but their importance cannot be overstated—their commander is Lord Darro ir'Lain (LN male human wizard 6/knight phantom 6), one of the three most powerful people in Aundair, including Queen Aurala herself. Knights Arcane ride forth for the most important battles and take on the greatest challenges on the battlefield.

EL 11: A typical charge includes four knights mounted on magebred heavy warhorses.

Sir Adric ir'Vellan: LN male human duskblade^{PH2} 7.
Lady Dallia ir'Kavin: LG female half-elf fighter 1/wizard 5/eldritch knight 1.
Lady Arvana ir'Lain: LN female human knight 4/wizard 3.
Sir Cathrid: LG human cleric (Dol Arrah) 7.
Magebred Heavy Warhorses (4): MM 273, *ECS* 295 (swift breed).

Knight Phantoms

The knight phantoms are sometimes classified as light cavalry, but they are actually dragoons, or mounted infantry. They use *phantom steeds* to ride quickly to the site of a battle and into position, then dismiss the spells and use their combined martial and magical power to carry

SOLDIERING EQUIPMENT

Whether regulars, irregulars, mercenaries, or bandits, basic equipment varied little among the armies of the Last War. Inexperienced, light, or lower-ranked infantry and militia used inexpensive equipment—leather armor (sometimes studded) and simple weapons such as spears and javelins. Heavy infantry, cavalry, veterans, and special forces were more likely to wear medium or heavy armor and use more expensive martial weapons. Significant departures from these basic kits are detailed in the individual entries of this chapter.

the day. The knight phantom prestige class is described on *Five Nations* 41.

The knight phantoms are a branch of the Knights Arcane, and Lord Darro himself is a knight phantom.

EL 14: These units feature elite knight phantoms with a renowned commander.

Knight Phantom Commander: human fighter 1/wizard 5/knight phantom 4.

Knight Phantoms (7): human fighter 1/wizard 5/knight phantom 1.

THE FAMOUS OR INFAMOUS

Depending on whom you ask, Haldren ir'Brassek was either one of Aundair's greatest heroes of the Last War or its greatest war criminal.

Haldren ir'Brassek

NE human sorcerer 12

During the Last War, Haldren was responsible for some of Aundair's most memorable victories. He captured the city of Cragwar and its mines not once but twice—once from Breland and once from Thrane. He even enjoyed some success in the Eldeen Reaches, proving that his was one of the few military minds in Aundair who could comprehend the guerrilla tactics of the Reachers, anticipate their movements, and strike effectively against them. Sometimes, in fact, he struck entirely too effectively, putting villages of innocent citizens to the torch (or the *fireball*) in order to smoke out guerrillas. His ruthless treatment of civilians resulted in a Thronehold Tribunal inquiry after the war; Queen Aurala's postwar campaign to rid herself of ambitious and "insufficiently" loyal vassals led to his extradition, conviction, and sentencing as a war criminal. Indeed, Haldren is one of the Tribunal's few successful prosecutions.

Many officers of Aundair's military are sympathetic to Haldren and would gladly serve under him if he were restored to command. In their eyes, he embodies a dedication to the Aundairian nation and a no-nonsense approach to fighting battles that they feel is lacking in the current leadership. Others whisper that he orchestrated the slaughter of civilians as massive sacrifices to the Devourer or another of the Dark Six, and that he would have been better executed rather than thrown in Dreadhold, lest he somehow escape even that impregnable prison.

In truth, Queen Aurala was correct. Haldren ir'Brassek sees himself as sort of a reincarnation of Galifar I, destined to forge a new empire from the ashes of the old. In his mind, the walls of Dreadhold cannot hold him for long.

ARMIES OF BRELAND

Both in numbers and in industry, Breland matches or surpasses any of the nations involved in the Last War. Still, its people are reluctant to commit themselves fully to the fight for other people's freedoms, or for Wroann's pretensions to the crown of Galifar. Only when foreigners seize Brelish territory, and combat cannot be avoided, do the Brelish fight with vigor.

The flexible command structure of Brelish military units is a great advantage. They quickly adapt to different threats, from the massed Thrane levies, to the skilled mercenaries of Cyre, to the arcane and druidic forces of Aundair and Eldeen.

MILITARY STRUCTURE

Breland's military tradition is one of independence, charismatic leadership, and freestanding militias answerable to cities and provinces. It is also known for the excellence of its archery and, most important, its habit of rewarding merit in its officer corps, rather than seniority, rank, or piety. Its army is larger than any other but for Karrnath's. It has an uneasy relationship with mercenaries, using them to reduce its own losses but never quite trusting them.

Infantry

A Brelish infantry platoon consists of three volunteer squads or, in the last twenty years of the war, three enlisted squads. The troops are usually led by a captain, a 3rd-level knight^{PH2} or fighter.

A company consists of four platoons. A major, normally a 4th-level knight or fighter, commands the company.

A regiment of foot or archers consists of three companies. Such regiments are led by colonels, normally a 5th-level knight or fighter. Colonels are usually mounted, though they command infantry.

A legion—the largest unit that Breland typically fields—consists of two or three regiments and is commanded by a field marshal, who is usually a 7th- or 8th-level knight or fighter and an adjunct colonel, who is a 6th-level knight or fighter. A typically Brelish legion is made up of a regiment of foot, a regiment of archers, and a regiment of cavalry operating under a field marshal.

EL 5: These all-volunteer squads, consisting of citizen militia taking up arms on their own initiative, are led by a sergeant.

Sergeant: human fighter 2 or knight 2.

Volunteer Soldiers (9): human commoner 1.

EL 5: An all-enlisted squad features trained soldiers, usually from city backgrounds.

Sergeant: human fighter 2 or ranger 2.

Enlisted Soldiers (9): human warrior 1.

Cavalry

Brelish cavalry is organized into lances, squadrons, and regiments.

A captain, normally a 2nd-level knight^{PH2} or fighter, commands a squadron of three lances (the term for Brelish cavalry platoons).

A cavalry regiment groups six squadrons and is led by a major, a 5th level knight or fighter.

Beyond the regiment level, cavalry is incorporated into legions with infantry, typically with a single cavalry regiment combined with one or two regiments of foot or archers.

EL 8: Cavalry lances, consisting of either a quartet of mounted corporals or a trio of heavy chargers, are commanded by a captain.

Captain: human knight 2 or fighter 2.

Corporals (3 or 4): human knight 1 or fighter 1.

Light Warhorses (5): MM 274 or

Heavy Chargers (4): MM 274.

EL 10: Cavalry squadrons, consisting of either fifteen mounted light soldiers or twelve heavy chargers, are commanded by a major.

Major: human knight 4 or fighter 4.

Captains (2): human knight 2 or fighter 2.

Corporals (9 or 12): human knight 1 or fighter 1.

Light Warhorses (15): MM 274 or

Heavy Chargers (12): MM 274.

Brelish Rangers

Brelish Rangers are specialized in reconnaissance, keeping the large Brelish legions moving in the right directions. They operate miles or even days in advance of their regular forces. The most common unit of Brelish Rangers is called a band, or sometimes a "Ranger's dozen," of eleven soldiers.

Band of Rangers (EL 6): Made up solely of trained warriors, a Brelish band consists of standard wilderness-skilled volunteers, assisted by a sorcerer or artificer and led by a ranger capable of tracking and assessing enemies' forces.

Warden: human or shifter ranger 3.
Wands (2): human sorcerer 1.
Volunteers (8): human warrior 1.

Common Tactics

The armies of Breland are quick and flexible, striking from ambush and quick to retreat when things turn against them. They are fierce in protecting their own territory and much more hesitant beyond the borders they know.

Brelish troops operate in standard ranks and formations, but are fully capable of fighting even when their commanders are slain. Breland is particularly renowned for the skill of their archer troops (all members of such squads have the Weapon Focus feat associated with the kind of bow they use).

ELITE UNITS

Breland's elites include famed strike forces and dragoons. Both are described below.

Redcloak Battalion

The Redcloak Battalion is the best of the best among Brelish elite forces. Devastatingly skilled heavy infantry supported by magic, the Redcloaks serve as an immovable rock in the front lines of several Brelish battles. The group never exceeds forty members but is fully capable of outfighting far superior numbers. More extensive information about the Redcloak Battalion can be found in *Sharn: City of Towers*, on page 140.

EL 14: A Redcloak strike force is the smallest operational unit of the battalion.

Lieutenant Meira: female shifter warrior 8/ranger 6.
Alain Lanner: male human warrior 7/fighter 2.
Maal Jonz: male half-orc warrior 7/barbarian 2.
Heeson Graccen: female elf adept 9.
Pol Makker: male dwarf magewright 8/fighter 1.

Breland Dragoons

These mounted infantry are capable of traveling faster and carrying heavier gear than regular infantry. The Breland dragoons, in their various companies and flashy uniforms, are not quite as famous as the boldest wands or cavalry units, but in many cases their toughness and mobility carried the day. Like cavalry, they are organized into lances and squadrons. Their weapons and tactics are often unorthodox.

EL 7: These elite mobile infantry lances are supported by an artificer.

Captain: human knight 4.
Hussar Sergeant: human knight 2.
Hussar Wand: human artificer 2.
Outriders (8): human fighter 1.

THE FAMOUS OR INFAMOUS

Presented here are two heroes of Breland, their memories still bright in song and story.

Brother Malice

N male half-elf sorcerer 3/ranger 6/arcane archer 1

A member of the Brelish Rangers, Brother Malice experienced his first brush with fame during a deep infiltration supply raid on a Cyran lightning rail station. His most famous shot was one that he later described as "spitting at the sun."

In the latter years of the war, Malice was forty-four years old and preparing to retire from active fighting to train Breland's younger archers. On his last mission, his Ranger band was operating in the northeast against Thrane. In the distance, they spotted a large Thrane raiding force consisting of cavalry and light foot. Scouting for details about the enemy troops, they circled around and approached the Thranes from the flank. Malice's sharp eyes picked out the leader, and he recognized Sir Jeffin Krayci, a renowned Thrane general noted for his brilliant cavalry raiding tactics and his inspiring leadership.

As the band prepared to withdraw, they were spotted, and several Thrane squads immediately wheeled and charged. The other Rangers broke for the cover of a nearby wood, but Malice stood and fired a single shot at the general, arcing it over the charging cavalry. Barely making it to the copse and escaping the Thrane search parties, Malice and two surviving Rangers later learned that General Krayci perished that day—a Brelish arrow found a gap in his neck armor and slew him instantly.

To this day, Malice calls this remarkable event "just a lucky shot." Ironically, his modesty feeds the legends of the Rangers, and he is remembered fondly as the man who robbed the Thranes of one of their most accomplished leaders.

Urik Rowan

LN female human aristocrat 2/knight 4/magewright 2

Lady Urik Rowan was a Brelish general who lost a string of battles and still won the nation's heart when she destroyed a horrific *eldritch machine*.

Rowan was raised as a child of privilege, attending the small private Quinrest military academy in Sharn, and was commissioned in 966. Within six years, she rose to the command of a Brelish legion that included both mud-stained veterans and a company of aristocratic dragoons born to the saddle. Still, Rowan was not liked—some considered her too aloof, others called her the bitch-general. She proved willing to destroy companies if it would win her a crucial piece of ground, and many believed she cared more for advancement than for her troops.

In fact, Rowan's journals show that she felt her failures and the troop losses keenly, but thought she had to comply with orders, no matter the cost, and maintain a bold public face. Nevertheless, her unorthodox tactics and heavy use of wands were experiments that cost the lives of hundreds of soldiers. Some have never forgiven her for those experiments, but they were clearly the foundation for her later successes. The only "victory" of her early years was at the battle of Marguul Pass, when she took command after General Minyu's death and prevented a worse rout. Even so, her reputation and this episode did nothing to endear her to the nation.

Rowan's controversial leadership resulted in her spending much of the war stationed far from the front lines in Droaam. Thus, she was on hand when that area rose in revolt. Once again, Lady Rowan suffered a string of defeats, but given her desperate lack of troops and resources and the overwhelming power of the monsters arrayed against her, that was not surprising. She was responsible for a series of brilliant maneuvers using light infantry, Brelish Rangers, and her hand-picked and self-trained company of wands. Her efforts stymied Droaamite advances that allowed hundreds of Brelish citizens to escape Droaam who would have otherwise perished.

Rowan's greatest renown stemmed from her actions at the Battle of Butterfield in late 987. The last remaining sizable settlement of humans in Droaam, located in the foothills west of the Greywalls, Butterfield had been serving as a gathering point for fleeing refugees. King Boranel ordered the final evacuation, and countless slow-moving citizens, most dragging their last remaining worldly possessions, clogged the pass beyond Butterfield. A powerful force of ogres and gnolls moved in for the slaughter. Panic spread when word reached the humans that six hill giants bore an *eldritch machine* before the Droaamite columns that turned all weapons within a one-mile radius into bane weapons against humans. Rowan used a combination of hit-and-run tactics, leveled bombards, and sharpshooting to harass the monsters, kill the giants, and destroy the *eldritch machine.* Though few of her troops survived the engagement, nearly all of the refugees cleared the pass and reached safety.

ARMIES OF CYRE

None of the provinces of Galifar was as ill suited to the rigors and violence of the Last War as was Cyre, the Purple Jewel in Galifar's Crown. This crossroads of culture, the heart of the nation's artisan soul, fielded a military that was only a pale shadow of its neighbors. Further, it was Cyre's own Mishann who was due to ascend the throne, and thus the Cyrans were the last to know of the usurpers' intentions. Had it not been for mercenaries—including the Valenar, goblinoids of Darguun, and warforged purchased from House Cannith—Cyre could never have survived even until the Day of Mourning. As is so often the case in war, the noncombatants and the innocents suffer most, and Cyre was no exception.

MILITARY STRUCTURE

Although Cyre had less of a martial tradition than any of the other provinces of Galifar, it did have a standing army of its own. Smaller than those of its neighbors, this army formed the core of Cyre's defenses, around which the mercenary companies and foreign forces revolved.

Infantry

A Cyran infantry platoon consisted of two volunteer squads and one enlisted squad. It was usually led by a captain, a 2nd-level cleric or fighter.

A company consisted of three platoons, commanded by a major, normally a 3rd-level cleric or fighter.

A regiment—the largest unit Cyre typically fielded—consisted of three companies. Such regiments were led by colonels, normally a 5th-level cleric or fighter.

In the later years of the war, many of the volunteer and enlisted soldiers were warforged, though humanoids continued to fill most officer posts.

EL 5: "Volunteer" squads consisted primarily of simple citizens taking up arms for their country, bolstered by an adept and led by a sergeant.

Sergeant: human warrior 2.
Corporal: human adept 1.
Volunteer Soldiers (8): human commoner 1.

EL 5: The enlisted squad, the core unit of the Cyran military, consisted entirely of trained soldiers.

Sergeant: human warrior 2.
Corporal: human adept 2.
Enlisted Soldiers (8): human warrior 1.

Cavalry

Cyre rarely fielded any cavalry unit larger than a platoon, which consisted of three cavalry squads. A captain, normally a 2nd-level cleric or fighter, commanded. Beyond the platoon level, cavalry was incorporated into regiments with infantry.

EL 8: A cavalry squad consisted of either a quartet of mounted corporals or paired warforged chargers. Both types were commanded by a major.

Major: human adept 3 or fighter 3.
Warforged Chargers (2): MM3 191.
Corporals (4): human adept 1 or fighter 1.
Light Warhorses (1 or 5): MM 274.

Border Sentinels

Throughout most of the war, Cyre was far more intent on protecting its own borders than expanding its territory. In addition to its normal soldiers, it made substantial use of special border guardians. The most common unit was the bastion, which consisted of two patrols led by a master sentinel, normally a 3rd-level human or half-elf ranger.

EL 5: A border patrol was made up solely of trained warriors, assisted by clerics and led by a ranger capable of guiding them through the wilds of Cyre's outskirts.

Sentinel: human or half-elf ranger 2.
Corporals (2): human adept 1.
Enlisted Soldiers (4): human warrior 1.

Common Tactics

Except in Karrnath, the armies of Cyre frequently held back, allowing their mercenaries to lead an attack or a charge. This strategy was not cowardice on their part (no matter what other nations might claim), but instead an acknowledgment that the foreign forces might well know more about how to conduct a particular sort of battle than do the Cyran soldiers. Cyre's troops usually conducted themselves as guerrilla soldiers and mobile units. They rarely marched into battle in large ranks, preferring speed and mobility. They used light horses and small units to attack an enemy from the flank, then disappeared back into rough terrain unfamiliar to the enemy. (This was a particularly favored tactic of the border sentinels.)

All this is sharply distinct from Cyran operations in Karrnath. Regular Cyran military forces conducted standard operations there, including trench warfare and massed battles for much of the war.

ELITE UNITS

Cyre relied heavily on adventuring parties and specialized strike teams during the Last War. The following are among the most famous.

Champions of the Bell

Taking their name from one of Cyre's heraldic symbols, this team of specialized warriors emerged late in the war, five years before the Day of Mourning. In that time, however, they captured the hearts and the imaginations of the Cyran people with their daring raids into enemy territory, their retrieval of secrets of state, and—most famously—the rescue of Duke Corlan Varak (LN male human aristocrat 4/fighter 3) from the dungeons of Atur. What the general population of Cyre didn't know was that the Champions of the Bell were semiofficial assassins, sponsored by secret elements in the government. The Champions' great victories, although genuine, were undertaken primarily to draw attention away from their activities when they were not under the nation's scrutiny. All the Champions were reportedly slain on a raid into Thrane several weeks before the Day of Mourning, and in fact a memorial procession in their honor was to have taken place a mere two days after Cyre's destruction. In truth, one of the team was taken as a prisoner of war in Thrane. This fact has only recently been revealed—as of yet Thrane's leaders refuse to say who, admitting only that the individual was released after the Treaty of Thronehold was signed, and they have no more knowledge of his (or her) whereabouts than anyone else.

EL 9: These elite soldiers are master infiltrators.

Elspeth Padalas: N female human rogue 5.

Beld: NE male changeling rogue 5/assassin 1.

Duril Kelist: CN male human spellthief[CAd] 5.

Gesricar Eight-Fingers: NG male half-elf duskblade[PH2] 5.

The Iron Tide

Cyre was the first nation to employ units consisting entirely of warforged, without human officers or advisors. The most famous of these was the Iron Tide, a squad of roughly half a dozen warforged, each with its own area of expertise much like those found in traditional adventuring parties. The Iron Tide was primarily a target-and-destroy unit, embodying the old saw about "the best defense." If a potent enemy force succeeded in penetrating Cyre's borders, the Iron Tide might be dispatched against the foe's advance scouts or command retinue, hoping to blind or even behead the invading army. The Iron Tide operated continuously from 974 through the Day of Mourning, though its membership fluctuated somewhat as the unit took casualties and received replacements. (The names below represent the Iron Tide's longest-running roster.) Rumor has it that a large portion of the Iron Tide survives today and has joined up with the infamous Lord of Blades. Those who knew the Tide members personally claim this is highly unlikely.

EL 10: These warforged elite formed a potent strike force.

Commander Ironhorn: LN male personality warforged marshal[MH] 7.

Sliver: LG female personality warforged fighter 5.

Brick: LE male personality warforged monk 4.

Claymore: LN male personality warforged fighter 4.

Lode: CG female personality warforged ranger 4.

Rusty: N male personality warforged cleric 4 (Sovereign Host).

Slag: N male personality warforged warmage[CAr] 4.

THE FAMOUS OR INFAMOUS

Presented here are a hero and a traitor of Cyre, their memories having survived even the destruction of the nation itself.

Ladislav Hightor, the Boar of Cyre

LN male dwarf wereboar fighter 6

Ladislav was over two hundred years old when the Last War began. The scion of a dwarf merchant family dwelling in Thrane, he fled from that nation when the Church of the Silver Flame embarked upon its crusade against lycanthropes. For many decades he dwelt in Cyre, keeping his secret and working as a jeweler and metalsmith. In that time, he came to love the cultured soul of that nation, and he was as enraged as any native-born Cyran when Mishann was denied her ascension to the throne. Ladislav enlisted in the Cyran military, where he fought for several years until his unit perished. From that point on, Ladislav battled alone. His favored targets were spies and double agents, and he was more than once hunted by Cyran officials for murder, until it was revealed that his victim had in fact been an operative of Karrnath or Thrane, rather than the loyal citizen he or she seemed to be. His fame spread, thanks in part to a Cyran bard who witnessed his activities, and he grew to become one of the nation's most beloved folk heroes.

Shaldra Antarielle, Daughter of Lies

NE female human artificer 7

For many years, Shaldra was one of Cyre's military heroes. Though she never once set foot on the front lines, everyone knew that many of the nation's victories were her doing. One of the nation's greatest non-Cannith artificers, she created all manner of mystical tools and weapons for use by Cyre's soldiers and mercenaries. The troops loved her, and the citizens adored her.

At least, they did until the Champions of the Bell returned from an intelligence raid on Karrnath with documents proving that Shaldra had been in collusion with operatives of King Kaius for months. She hadn't given them everything—just enough information on magical advancements and troop movements to ensure that Cyre couldn't possibly win a decisive victory on the border. Shaldra fled Cyre mere moments ahead of the Cyran military police—and only a few more moments ahead of a lynch mob.

In truth, though few realized it, Shaldra was no mere Karrnathi agent, but a paid operative of Merrix d'Cannith. Her duties were to test Cannith's inventions before announcing their existence—so that, if they failed, the house reputation wouldn't suffer—and to ensure that the conflict between the nations continued unabated. Whatever her true motives, Shaldra is remembered by the Cyran survivors with seething hatred, and even today, multiple rewards for her capture, dead or alive, circulate through the adventuring and mercenary communities.

ARMIES OF KARRNATH

Karrnath, always the most martial of the Five Nations, boasted an army larger and more well trained than any other faction early in the war. Combined with its advance knowledge of the coming struggle—Kaius was, after all, one of the war's instigators—it seems inconceivable that Karrnath would not emerge from the war as the clear victor. Still, a series of devastating famines and plagues, combined with diplomatic and political blunders caused in part by the military's reliance on brute force over creative thinking, offset the nation's military power for much of the war.

Long before the Last War, Karrnath's culture had been steeped in military reverence. The army was a high calling—the scions of the rich and noble were groomed as officers. Of all the nations, Karrnath's citizens were the most eager to fall in behind their leaders on the march to war. Karrnath's rulers maintained the focus of the citizenry by never leaving a wartime footing and constantly employing nationalistic rhetoric to keep the people's anger stoked.

Karrnath's efforts were devoted mainly against Cyre and Aundair in the early part of the Last War, then shifted largely to a violent conflict with Thrane in the later years. Even after the war, the interaction between these former allies nearly qualifies as a cold war unto itself.

MILITARY STRUCTURE

While many of the other nations focus on smaller and more mobile units, Karrnath makes substantial use of enormous legions and heavy cavalry. Its goal is to defeat an enemy force simply by overrunning it and crushing it into the earth.

The undead soldiers for which the nation became infamous—and which resulted in the final diplomatic break between Karrnath and Thrane—are most often formed into separate units.

Infantry

A standard infantry platoon consists of two regular squads and one soldier squad. In an arcane platoon, an arcane battle team replaces one of the regular squads. A captain, usually a 3rd-level fighter, leads a platoon.

An infantry company is made up of two standard infantry platoons, and an arcane company consists of two arcane platoons. A major, usually a 4th-level fighter or knight, commands a company.

A regiment includes three companies, usually one arcane company with either two infantry companies or two undead companies. The commander of a regiment is a colonel—a 5th-level cleric, fighter, or knight.

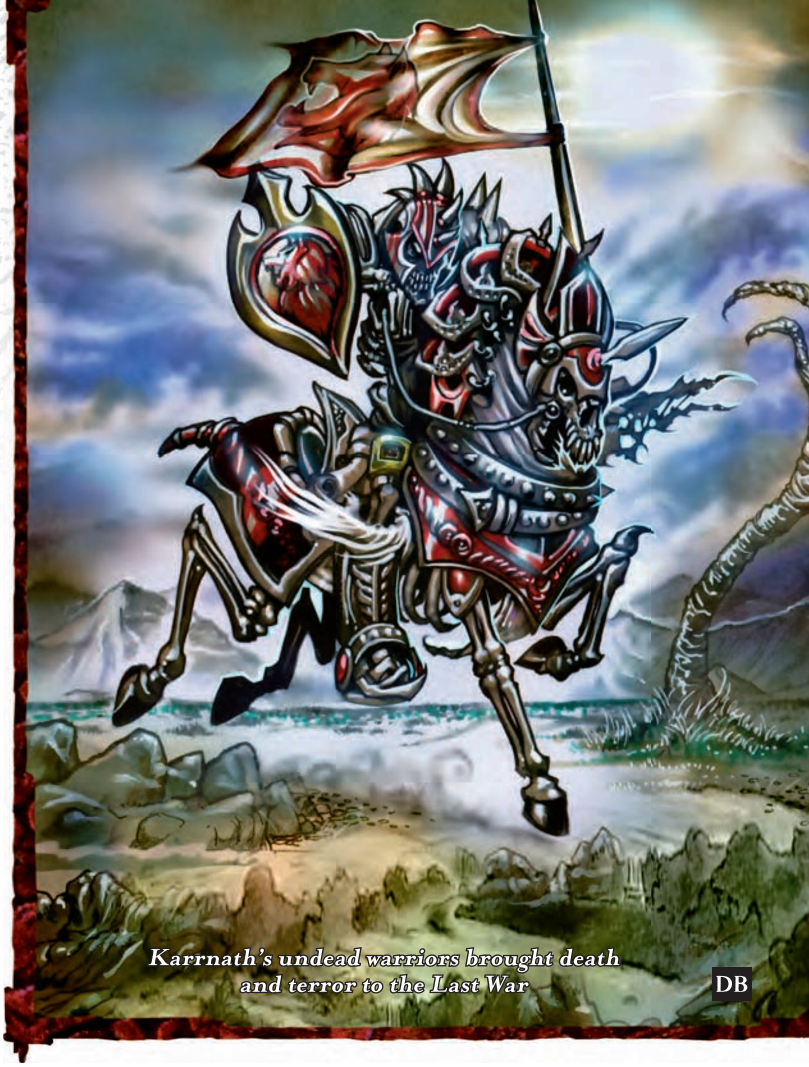
A brigade consists of two regiments with a general—a 6th-level cleric, fighter, or knight—as its commander. The two regiments in a brigade might include one cavalry regiment and one infantry regiment.

A legion is two brigades led by a warlord, who is a 7th- or 8th-level fighter or knight.

EL 6: A regular squad consists of trained warriors, supported by a cleric and commanded by a sergeant.

Sergeant: human fighter 2.
Battlemage: human adept 1.
Regulars (10): human warrior 1.

EL 8: A soldier squad is more well trained than regulars.



Karrnath's undead warriors brought death and terror to the Last War

DB

Elite Sergeant: human knight$^{\text{PH2}}$ 4.
Battlemage: human adept 2 or warmage$^{\text{CAr}}$ 2.
Elite Soldiers (10): human fighter 1.

EL 9: An arcane battle team focuses on spellcasters but includes soldiers to protect the magic-wielders.

Arcane Sergeant: human warmage$^{\text{CAr}}$ 5.
Arcane Specialists (4): human adept 2 or dread necromancer$^{\text{HH}}$ 2.
Elite Soldiers (10): human fighter 1.

Undead Infantry

Karrnath was initially reluctant to mobilize large undead units that lacked living officers, due to the inability of the undead to think creatively. Toward the end of the war, however, this approach became more and more difficult to maintain. (The DM can replace any of these living officers with additional Karrnathi undead, perhaps with higher base abilities.)

An undead platoon consists of two light undead squads and two heavy undead squads. (Late in the war, all were heavy undead squads.) A platoon is commanded by a captain, usually a 5th-level cleric, dread necromancer$^{\text{HH}}$, or fighter.

An undead company consists of two undead platoons under the command of a living major, usually a 6th-level cleric, dread necromancer, fighter, or knight$^{\text{PH2}}$.

Above the company level, undead infantry are part of the standard infantry structure.

EL 6: Light undead squads include "normal" undead, led by a Karrnathi skeleton or zombie.

Karrnathi Skeleton or Zombie Commander: ECS 292.

Human Warrior Skeletons (6): MM 226.
Human Commoner Zombies (6): MM 266.

EL 10: Heavy undead squads consist of Karrnathi undead, along with a mortal commander or, later in the war, a dread marshal.

Dread Sergeant: human fighter 3 or
Karrnathi Dread Marshal: see page 150.
Karrnathi Skeletons or Zombies (10): ECS 292.

Cavalry

A standard cavalry platoon consists of three light cavalry squads. In an arcane cavalry platoon, an arcane strike team replaces one of the regular squads. An undead cavalry platoon is made up of three undead cavalry squads. A captain, usually a 3rd-level fighter, leads a platoon.

A cavalry company consists of two cavalry platoons—a standard company has standard platoons, an arcane company has arcane platoons, and an undead company has undead platoons. A major, usually a 4th-level fighter or knight, commands a company.

A cavalry regiment consists of three companies—usually one arcane cavalry company with either two cavalry companies or two undead cavalry companies. The commander of a regiment is a colonel, who is a 5th-level cleric, fighter, or knight.

Above the regiment level, cavalry are incorporated into brigades along with infantry regiments.

EL 9: Heavy horse are the most common Karrnathi cavalry unit. The commanding sergeant is mounted on a heavy warhorse.

Cavalry Sergeant: human knight 2.
Regular Cavalry (10): human fighter 1.
Heavy Warhorses (11): MM 273.

EL 10: An arcane strike team consists of numerous casters and the soldiers assigned to protect them, all mounted on light warhorses.

Arcane Sergeant: human warmage^{CAr} 5.
Arcane Specialists (4): human adept 2 or dread necromancer^{HH} 2.
Elite Soldiers (10): human fighter 1.
Light Warhorses (15): MM 274.

EL 11: Undead cavalry units are terrifying, featuring Karrnathi skeletons or zombies on skeletal heavy warhorses.

Karrnathi Skeletons or Zombies (10): ECS 292
Skeletal Heavy Warhorses (10): MM 273, 225.

General Tactics

Despite the skill and determination of their soldiers, and the dependable obedience of undead troops, the armies of Karrnath suffer from a lack of creative tactics. For the most part, they rely on the size and strength of their forces, and the expertise of individual soldiers, to overrun the enemy. Armies as large and rooted in tradition as Karrnath's take a long time to adapt to change. The introduction of the undead—most of which, even if intelligent, lacked imagination—didn't help matters. Even by the war's end, Karrnathi forces would, more often than not, attempt a straightforward assault unless doing so was clearly the wrong decision.

Undead are often used for pursuit and patrol, missions on which their ability to remain constantly active is a major advantage.

ELITE UNITS

For the most part, Karrnath's elite units are formed from knightly orders. A few are composed of undead strike forces, however.

The Emerald Claw and Other Knightly Orders

Karrnath's military culture has given rise to a number of knightly orders throughout its history. Some of these groups are loyal to a specific noble or warlord, others to a religious institution, and still others to Karrnath itself, but all are considered quite prestigious. For the bulk of the war, the most honored of these was the Order of the Emerald Claw. Consisting of devout patriots and military minds, the order spread throughout the armed forces—at its height, it accounted for over a quarter of all Karrnathi officers, and several legions were made up entirely of Emerald Claw members. Only late in the war, after Regent Moranna declared the order to be traitorous and began purging the most vocal members, did its luster fade.

The Emerald Claw was far from the only knightly order that became heavily involved in the war. Several other groups were able to field whole regiments of their own members, and quite a few military units consisted of a majority of one order or another. Although this situation often increased feelings of camaraderie and solidarity among the officers and soldiers, it also created friction. Rival orders competed with one another, sometimes to the detriment of an overall battle plan, by covertly undermining or lightly sabotaging each others' efforts. Soldiers loyal to one order might prove reluctant to follow the orders of an officer belonging to another.

Described below are the largest and most widespread of Karranth's wartime knightly orders, including the region in which each is based (though this was not necessarily its only area of influence or strength), and a brief overview of the group.

Adamant Fang (Vedykar): Trained in both traditional and woodland warfare, its members are among Karrnath's almost nonexistent light cavalry.

Blackened Sky (Karrlakton): Champions of industry, the Order of the Blackened Sky makes substantial use of alchemical and mechanical weapons; in recent years, it has also become one of Karrnath's greatest defenders against monstrous incursions from the Mournland.

Conquering Fist (Vulyar/Korth): This is a relatively new knightly order that has not yet gained the respect of others of its sort. During the war, the Conquering Fist was based in Vulyar, and often led a charge into enemy territory. After the expulsion of the Emerald Claw, Kaius relocated the Conquering Fist to Korth, and has been advocating them as the new patriotic heart of the Karrnathi military.

Emerald Claw (Korth): This group (discussed above) is made up of Karrnathi patriots who have since been declared traitors; they are secretly servants of the Blood of Vol (*ECS* 244).

Inviolate Way (Rekkenmark): Restrictive even for a knightly order, the Inviolate Way accepts only applicants of noble blood who are members of the Order of Rekkenmark (*Five Nations* 106); it is responsible for assisting, serving, and protecting nobles, royals, and warlords.

Onyx Skull (Atur): The first knightly order to truly embrace the presence of the undead, it provides many of the officers who oversee undead units, and is responsible for the creation of the bone knight prestige class (*Five Nations* 117).

Bastion of Frozen Flesh

Used primarily as hidden defenders, a Bastion of Frozen Flesh consists of undead corpses that appear inanimate most of the time, but instantly activate and attack when they sense the presence of a living creature within 30 feet. Karrnathi forces often bury a Bastion of Frozen Flesh in shallow trenches a mountain pass or along a trade route where they expect enemies to pass. Here the corpses can wait indefinitely until activated. On rare occasions, the bastions are used offensively, smuggled into enemy cities or—in one highly publicized attack—even dropped from low-flying airships into populated areas.

EL 13: A typical Bastion of Frozen Flesh consists of one of the two groups of undead described below.

Bleakborn (8): Libris Mortis 86 or
Bodaks (6): MM 28.

The Hand of Karrnath

A Hand of Karrnath, consisting of four undead operatives, is an elite group that answers directly to Regent Moranna. These groups took to the field of battle at times, but their primary purpose during the Last War was assassination. The last of these forces were supposedly destroyed on a mission to Cyre during the Day of Mourning, but rumors of their continued activities circulate to this day.

EL 9: This undead band features more than one member with class levels.

Avlast: LE male ghast fighter 2, *MM* 119.
Shiril: LN female wight rogue 2, *MM* 255.
Lavro: LE male mummy, *MM* 190.
Mathir: LE male ghoul adept 4, *MM* 118.

ARMIES OF THRANE

The armies of Thrane claim the blessing of the Silver Flame and for the most part act in the devoted, compassionate, honest, and true manner befitting such an honor. In the early war years, however, more than a few descended into religious fervor and committed atrocities against their "heathen" neighbors. Clerics, adepts, and paladins of the Silver Flame were swept along in the righteousness of the levied troops, but as reason began to reassert itself and the dictates of their superiors moderated, they attempted to curtail the worst excesses.

After King Thalin died, the church hierarchy gradually asserted control over all aspects of Thrane's military. Still, an officer class drawn from the deposed aristocracy continues to command troops. Indeed, in many ways, the armies of Thrane have become the last refuge of the nobility in a theocratic kingdom. Their expertise often leads them to powerful positions of command, though the Diet of Cardinals is careful never to give too much command over the armies to any single officer, no matter how successful or how well-loved by the people. In many ways, constant political interference by religious overseers (and the marked change in their expectations and demands) is Thrane's greatest weakness. The Cardinals do not wish to assume command of the armies (for a defeat on the battlefield might be construed as a rebuke of the Cardinals' faith or piety), but neither do they trust anyone else to do so.

The armies are almost always made up of levies of untrained troops supported by strong officers, well-regarded cavalry, and middling wands and poor archery. They are remembered more often as large groups than as smaller units: the Army of the Northern Crusade, the Silver Legion, the Legion of Perpetual Adoration, the Legion of the Pure, and so on.

MILITARY STRUCTURE

The armies of Thrane are usually raised by one or more Cardinals who sponsor, equip, and fund them; in some cases, patriotic nobles or knightly orders sponsor troops. After the establishment of the theocracy, the traditional titles of captain, major, and marshal were abandoned in favor of new titles reflecting the young nation's piety. In addition, because foot soldiers are so much more common than horse troops, cavalry officers use a related set of ranks.

THRANE'S MILITARY RANKS

Title	Rank Equivalent	Role
Ordren	Levy	Light foot
Brethren	Private	Light foot
Weight*	Levy	Heavy foot
Pikeren	Private	Heavy foot
Archren	Private	Infantry archer
Press Brethren	Levy (naval)	Marine
Faithrider	Corporal	Cavalry
Orderly	Corporal	Officer
Ship-Orderly	Corporal	Naval officer
Foot-Priest	Sergeant	Officer
Foot-Captain	Sergeant	Paladin
Press-Chief	Sergeant	Naval officer
Hoof-Priest	Lieutenant of Horse	Cavalry officer
Riding-Wand	Lieutenant of Horse	Cavalry officer
Ship-Priest	Lieutenant	Naval officer
Riding-Captain	Captain of Horse	Cavalry paladin
Ship-Father	Ship Captain or Commodore	Naval officer
Sacrosanct	Major or Captain of Foot	Infantry officer
Argent	Colonel or Field Marshal	Officer of foot and horse
Bishop-Militant	General	Army commander

* Experienced veterans of heavy foot were often called "double weights."

Infantry

A standard infantry platoon consists of either three light squads or two heavy squads. The orderly is usually a 1st- to 3rd-level human adept.

A company consists of five platoons. The sacrosanct is usually a 5th-level human adept or a 4th-level human paladin or fighter.

A flame consists of three companies, usually two infantry companies and one cavalry company. It is led by an argent, usually a 7th-level adept, cleric, paladin, or rarely a silver pyromancer (*Five Nations* 150).

A legion consists of three to five flames and is always led by a bishop, an adept or cleric of 9th level or higher.

EL 5: The levy squad is the staple unit of Thrane infantry, consisting of humans led by a lay priest. Levy troops are rarely armored and carry poor weapons, often no more than spears or clubs.

Orderly: human warrior 1.
Ordrens (7): human commoner 1.

EL 6: Heavy squads are slightly better armed but still poorly trained levied troops, usually led by a knight^{PH2} or a paladin.

Foot-Captain: human knight or paladin 1.
Orderly: human adept 1.
Weights (8): human commoner 1.

Cavalry

Thrane cavalry units, unlike its infantry, rise to a reasonable standard of training and skill. Their horses are of good stock, and their riders are sometimes among the Thrane elites. They work closely with wands and with experienced adepts.

A cavalry platoon consists of two light or heavy cavalry squads with a hoof-priest, a 5th-level fighter or paladin, in command.

A cavalry company—commanded by an argent who is a 6th-level adept, cleric, fighter, or paladin—is made up of two cavalry platoons, again either light or heavy.

A light or heavy cavalry company is sometimes included as part of a flame, along with two infantry companies. Thrane does not usually mix light and heavy cavalry within the same regiment.

EL 7: A light cavalry squad is led by a paladin on the best mount and made up of humans with lance and saber.

Riding-Captain: human fighter or paladin 3.
Hoof-Priest: human adept 2.
Faithriders (6): human warrior 1.
Light Warhorses (8): MM 274.

EL 10: A heavy cavalry squad consists of well-trained riders, two priests, a wand, a captain, and their heavy mounts.

Riding-Captain: human fighter or paladin 4.
Hoof-Priests (2): human adept 3.
Riding-Wand: magewright 3.
Faithriders (6): human fighter 1.
Heavy Warhorses (10): MM 273.

Common Tactics

Thrane's tactics and success are hugely dependent on the available leadership. Early in the war, local leaders, clerics, and even pious children all commanded enormous armies that saw catastrophic failure due to a lack of experience and too much reliance on divine favor. In the second half of the war, the Cardinals carefully appointed commanders, searching for the perfect blend of competence and piety. The greatest success was realized by those commanders who combined the Thrane willingness to suffer large casualties together with the use of elite forces to turn the tide of battle.

In general, levied troops are used to engage and fix the enemy. Once so engaged, cavalry or elites, in combination with priestly companies, enter battle to finish the foe. In an ideal situation, the sheer weight of numbers allows the Thranes to surround and annihilate their enemies.

ELITE UNITS

Thrane's individual units are largely forgotten; the names of its armies are the ones most commonly celebrated. However, a few of its paladins and priests are well known even outside Thrane's borders.

Avenging Hand of the Eternal Flame

The paladins of the Avenging Hand are the finest examples of Thrane martial arts, combining courage with faith and superb horsemanship with savvy use of shock tactics. Their nickname among many of the levies is simply the Flame's Hand. Their blazon is a white field bearing a red hand surrounded by silver fire.

The unit was based out of Flamekeep but spent all its time in the Thaliost region, riding at the head of the Army of the Northern Crusade. It led the assault that took the walls of Thaliost itself, and it was in the front ranks of those that beat back numerous Aundairian attempts to mount a counterattack.

Losses among the Flame's Hand were high over the years, but the unit never lacked for volunteers. In the later stages of the war, it marched with the Legion of Perpetual Adoration and helped to curb some of the worst excesses of that time, always defending the peasants and the poor. It also served at the Battle of Cairn Hill, repelling the Breland/Darguun invasion of southern Thrane.

Its founder and first commander was Lady Margil Hetrion, a friend of King Thalin's. Its current Knight-Commander is Alestair Marktaros (LG male human paladin 9), an individual of such stature that his name has been recommended for the Diet of Cardinals.

EL 6: An Avenging Hand squad is typically a group of two lances (three knights each) with a hoof-priest and a paladin commander.

Sir Handers Bonnifas: LG male human paladin 6.
Paladin's Heavy Warhorse: PH 45.
Hoof-Priest: LG female human cleric 3.
Knights-Brethren (6): LG male human knight^{PH2} 2.
Light Warhorses (7): MM 274.

The Red Sails

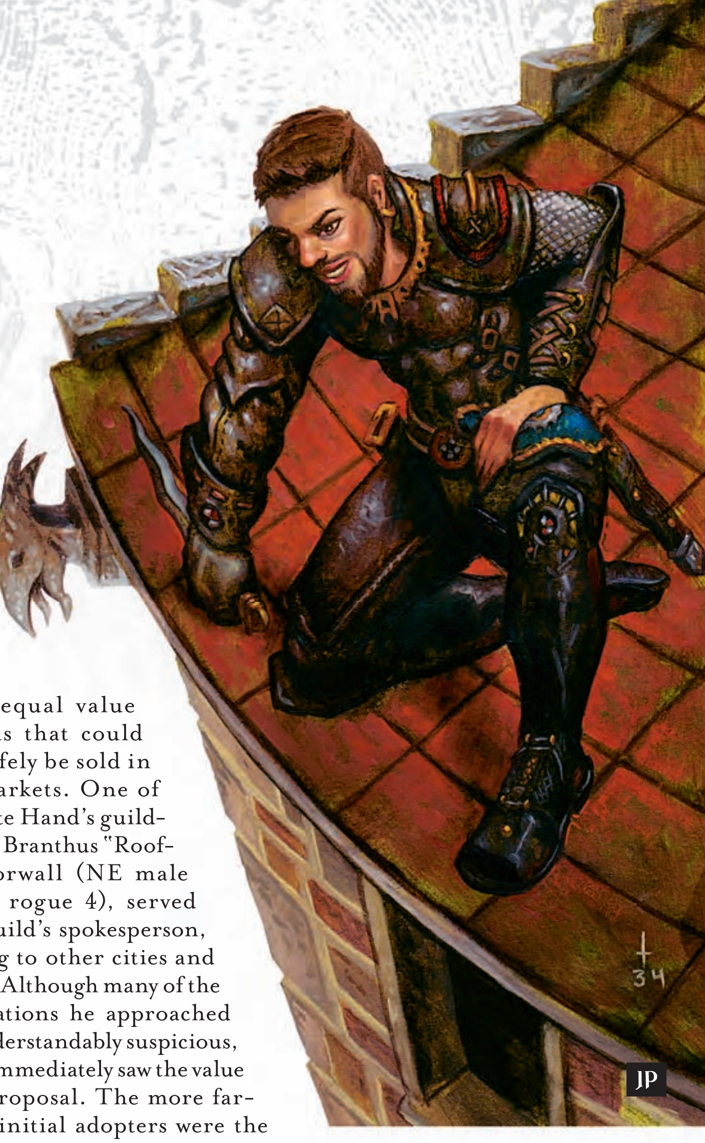
Thrane's navy used both volunteers and conscripts to power galleys, to conduct boarding actions, and to assault shores throughout Scions Sound. The Red Sails are remembered mostly for the latter—their night operations scuttled many Karranthi, Cyran, and Aundairian ships, merchants, and siege barges. The unit was more feared than loved, however; its commander, Sercyl Ghastor (LE male human ex-paladin 4/blackguard 2), adopted a motto of "Get it done." Persistent reports of execution of prisoners and torture ultimately led to Ghastor's being summoned before the Council of Cardinals for a hearing; he disappeared en route to Flamekeep and has not been heard of since. His troops were scattered among other naval units in an attempt to stamp out their wicked practices.

EL 7: This unit is a typical shore party of the Red Sails, looking for able-bodied victims to press into naval service.

Ship-Priest Mally: LE female human cleric 4.
Press-Chief Witherett: CN male fighter 3.
Ship-Orderly Vinders: LN male human cleric 3.
Press Brethren (8): LN and LE male and female human warrior 1.

THE BLACK HIGHWAY

The Last War was a time of fear and pain, but the chaos of the conflict also provided opportunity for a select few. One such "lucky" population was the criminal element across the Five Kingdoms and beyond. Not only did the need for warriors on the borders thin the ranks of law enforcement throughout the cities and the countryside, but the conflict itself offered substantial venues for profit.



A member of the Black Highway slips past the city watch by one of the many makeshift routes that give the group its name

Petty crime rose in almost every city, but of more direct relevance to the Last War was the growth of war profiteering. An underground network emerged, weblike, across the continent. Indeed, many of the Five Nations' criminal organizations proved more able to keep the peace with one another than did the governments themselves.

WAR PROFITEERING

At the start of the war, profiteering was a simple, impulsive affair. Merchants who were contracted to provide materiel shorted their shipments, selling the excess in open markets or to criminal fences. Soldiers scavenged weapons, armor, and magic items from the battlefields and sold them rather than turning them over to superior officers. Crafters used cheaper materials in their construction than they promised. All this activity was fairly common, as it is in all wars, and of relatively little consequence. Perpetrators who were caught were punished, sometimes severely, but otherwise no concentrated effort was made to put a halt to these practices. The governments had more important matters to address.

This situation changed dramatically in 907, when Cyre made an open proclamation: The Cyran military, well funded but not nearly so well armed as its rivals, would purchase scavenged weapons and magic from any source. Soldiers, Cyran and otherwise, began collecting goods from foes, and even fallen comrades, in unprecedented quantities. Many could not reach Cyre to sell their goods, of course, so merchants and smugglers made the exchanges for a share of the spoils.

The warring nations could do little about this practice. Even after Thrane and Karrnath began executing profiteering soldiers as traitors, the smuggling continued. The sale of stolen or scavenged war goods, no matter how dangerous, was simply too profitable to be ignored. In order to keep up with Cyre—or at least to slow down the flow of weapons into that country—the other nations were forced to purchase black-market goods as well. This led to a hypocritical and ultimately futile practice in which each military would purchase weapons from enemy nations' soldiers while executing its own troops for selling to others.

THE UNDERGROUND ALLIANCE

With the governments cracking down on war profiteering, perpetrators had to find more secretive means of selling their stolen goods. Naturally, they turned to thieves' guilds and criminal organizations.

This left the criminals with a problem. The monies in war profiteering were tempting indeed, but the guilds didn't want to draw the wrath of governments that were on a wartime footing. All but the most powerful and largest crime organizations knew that the military could wipe them out if they so chose. Particularly at the height of antiprofiteering mania in Karrnath and Thrane, where mere possession of goods that could be traced to the military or a battlefield was a death sentence, the guilds were reluctant to take that sort of risk.

The White Hand Guild of Sigilstar, in Thrane, claims credit for first coming up with the notion of an international web of smugglers and fences, though this boast cannot today be verified. By a process of passing stolen and scavenged goods back and forth across national borders, items that could be linked to a nearby battlefield or installation could be cleared out swiftly, in exchange for an equal value of goods that could more safely be sold in local markets. One of the White Hand's guildmasters, Branthus "Rooftop" Corwall (NE male half-elf rogue 4), served as the guild's spokesperson, traveling to other cities and nations. Although many of the organizations he approached were understandably suspicious, several immediately saw the value in his proposal. The more farsighted initial adopters were the Boromar Clan in Sharn, the Fist of Mabar in Vedykar, the Six Serpents in Passage, the Golden Crow in Thaliost, and the (prophetically named) Ghost-Walkers of Metrol.

Within mere months, lines of communication ran across a dozen criminal guilds in half a dozen nations. In addition to weapons and armor (magical and mundane), this growing network transported a variety of items including dragonshards, foodstuffs, food-creating magic items (which commanded a premium price during wartime shortages), drugs and alcohol, raw ores, letters and personal parcels (many of which had no other means of transport due to regular channels being reserved for official use), soarwood and similar rare materials, and, in a few cases, inactive constructs and warforged.

WARTIME SMUGGLERS

The network of communication and smuggling became known as the Black Highway in criminal parlance, though it involved far more than mere streets. Given the military crackdown on weapons and wartime goods, the guilds needed to be clever in finding ways to move stolen material across the borders.

Skilled wilderness travelers could cross borders fairly easily, avoiding trade routes and major patrols, but it was impossible to move large quantities of material this way. Some guilds used merchants, paid or extorted into cooperation, to move stolen goods under falsified papers. Hidden compartments in wagons and ships became popular, as did items such as *bags of holding* with spells on them to prevent easy magical detection. In some cases, guilds used soldiers themselves to transport goods, working a few extra blades into this unit, a few more wands into that.

Many smugglers were caught, but some grew so skilled at their trade that they banded together into an international smugglers' guild—called the Black Highway, after their network—that hires itself out to thieves' guilds and governments to this day. In the modern era, the Black Highway is led by Sillet Phelar (N female elf rogue 4/aristocrat 1). Although many of the goods the organization transported during the war are no longer worth its time, it is still expert in moving large quantities of restricted or expensive materials. From soarwood to eternal wands, dragonshards to raw mithral, and even (according to rumor) brand new warforged, the Black Highway boasts that it can provide almost any material or item imaginable, to any buyer—so long as the price is right.

THE MARKETS

Given their desire to avoid the attention of the military and law enforcement, the guilds could not simply hold large "black market bazaars" out in the open. Yet it did them no good to have these wartime goods if they couldn't sell them.

In many cases, the organizations funneled illicit goods into legitimate marketplaces. They might, for instance, sell a few swords to a merchant here and there, which the vendor could then offer alongside his more legitimately acquired goods. Although this process was relatively safe, it was inefficient and didn't turn a huge amount of profit.

The real money was in selling large quantities of goods to mercenary companies, houses, noble families, and some governments. The guilds involved in the Black Highway needed areas of neutral territory where they could arrange meetings without (much) fear of arrest. Of all these black markets that existed across the length and breadth of the continent, four were large enough to be worth individual discussion. Each of these areas still has something of a thriving black market, even if it's far smaller than it was during the war's height.

Lhazaar

The pirate and merchant population of the Lhazaar Principalities made it the perfect site for black-market arrangements. None of its rulers was powerful enough to field large law-enforcement teams, and many provincial leaders were happy to ignore the criminal activities entirely in exchange for a percentage. The location of the meetings changed, but they were commonly held at Skairn, Port Krez, or—ironically—overlooking Dreadhold Prison, in some of the small seaside communities of Cape Far.

Sea Weed

The "village" of Sea Weed is a criminal haven of the oddest sort. It has no fixed location. Rather, the community consists of several dozen ships and barges, lashed together and bridged to form a network of walkways and surfaces. Here, vendors can set up stalls, pirates can sell their wares, and deals can be made, all without outside interference. The bridges and ties are designed to be cut away at a moment's notice, allowing the ships to scatter in all directions at the approach of a naval force or other threat. At each assembly, the ship captains agree on their next location—telling few if any of their crew—ensuring that they can gather again and continue business as usual.

Sharn

Although most Black Highway markets are in out-of-the-way locations or small communities, one is located in Sharn itself. This greatest of cities is far from any of Breland's hostile borders, meaning that it boasted a relatively small complement of soldiers during the war. More important, the city's sheer size and cosmopolitan nature made it extremely difficult for those officials who did remain to do much policing of the marketplaces. The guilds discovered quickly that, so long as they did little to draw attention, the marketplaces of Sharn weren't much more dangerous than their other bazaars, and were often more profitable. And if things did go wrong, the docks offered a swift escape.

Stormhome

This haven for spies and fugitives was perfectly suited for the sale of goods, sometimes with Stormwalker assistance. See the House Lyrandar entry (page 69) for more on Stormhome's place in the Last War.

BRELAND

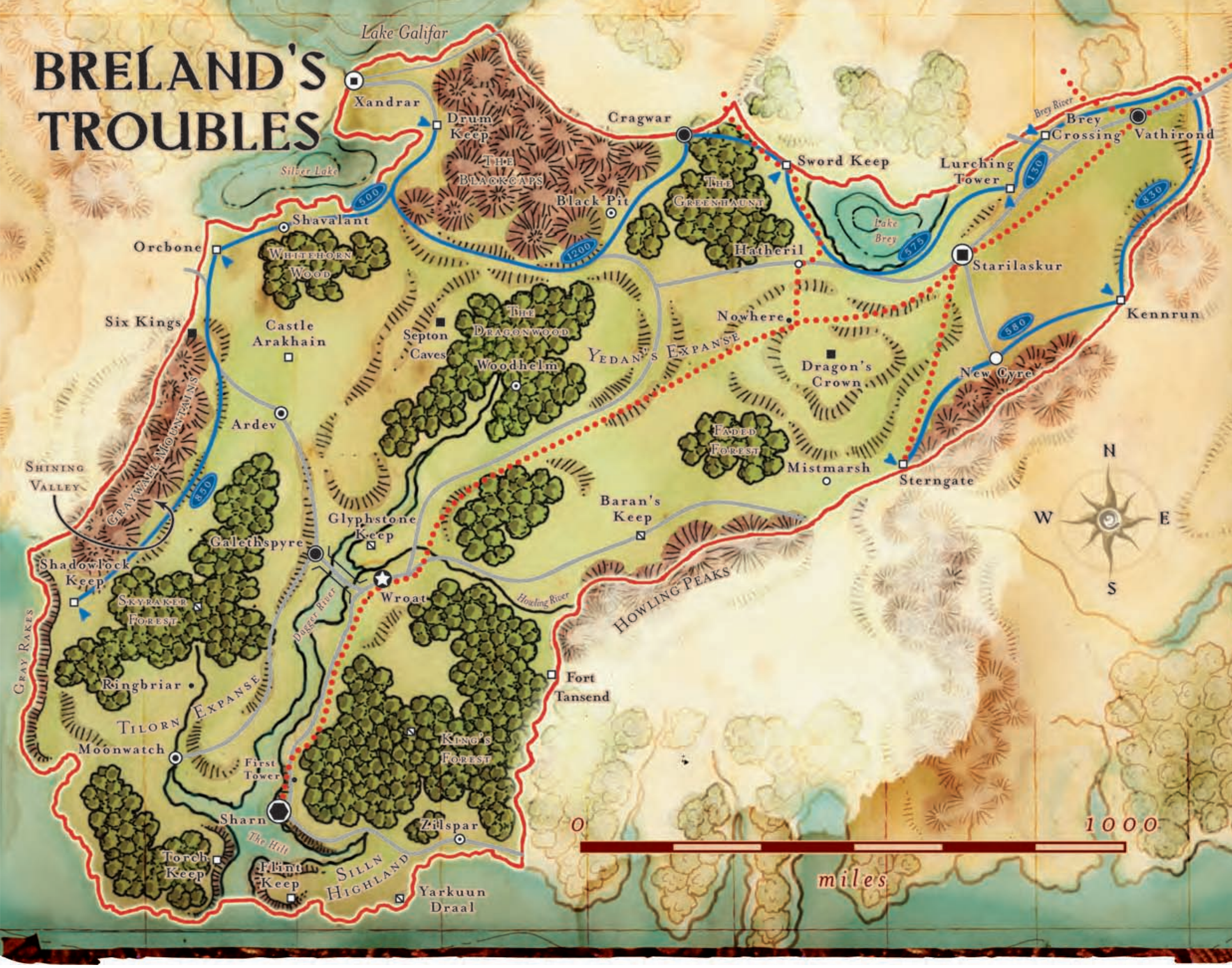
Although suspicion, hostility, and cold war continue throughout Khorvaire, Breland seems to suffer more than its fair share of lingering difficulties. This fact surprises many historians and sages; they note that Breland came out of the war in relatively good economic and political shape, and that it's less martial and fanatical than many other nations. Surely, they posit, the militant Karrns or the zealous Thranes should see the greatest amount of continuing unrest.

Although certain spots (such as Thaliost, page 92) do indeed serve as a focus for violence, and many nations skirmish at their borders, those countries face a smaller variety of conflicts than does Breland. The Redcloaks and the King's Dark Lanterns take what steps they can to quash these troubles, as do the less celebrated but no less vital watchmen and enlisted soldiers. Nevertheless, Breland's continuing problems could seriously damage the kingdom's well-being, even if only by blinding it to outside dangers.

BRELAND AT WAR

Breland shifted allegiances as often as any other combatant during the Last War, but it never earned the raging hatred that the other enemies felt for one another. Aundairians think of the Brelish as arrogant, Karrnath sees them as weak, and Thrane considers them corrupt—but none of those nations hold lasting grudges against Breland to the same extent they do against each other. At least part of this attitude doubtless dates back to the start of the war. Although Breland was one of the "aggressor states," standing with Karrnath and Thrane against the traditional ascension, the Brelish were never as belligerent as their fellows. (The Brelish today might claim that was due to their better nature, but the truth is that Breland didn't have the will or the forces to do more in the early war years.) Additionally, Breland lacked the passion of Thrane's Church of the Silver Flame and the dread of Karrnath's undead, two factors that have shaped people's attitudes to both those nations.

Perhaps the greatest contributors to Breland's current woes are fugitives from other nations. War criminals,


BRELAND'S TROUBLES
Lake Galifar
Xandrar
Drum Keep
The Blackcaps
Cragwar
Sword Keep
Brey River
Brey Crossing
Vathirond
Lurching Tower
Silver Lake
500
Shavalant
Orcbone
Whitehorn Wood
Black Pit
1200
The Greenhaunt
Lake Brey
575
130
830
Hatheril
Starilaskur
Kennrun
Six Kings
Castle Arakhain
Septon Caves
The Dragonwood
Woodhelm
Yedan's Expanse
Nowhere
Dragon's Crown
580
New Cyre
Ardev
Graywall Mountains
Shining Valley
850
Faded Forest
Mistmarsh
Sterngate
N
W
E
S
Baran's Keep
Glyphstone Keep
Galethspyre
Shadowlock Keep
Skyraker Forest
Wroat
Howling River
Howling Peaks
Dagger River
Gray Rakes
Ringbriar
Tilorn Expanse
Fort Tansend
King's Forest
Moonwatch
First Tower
Sharn
The Hilt
Zilspar
Torch Keep
Flint Keep
Silln Highland
Yarkuun Draal
0
1000
miles

deserters, and civilians seeking to escape the conflict fled deep into the lands of the largest of the Five Nations. In some instances, Breland welcomed them, as with the survivors of Cyre after the Day of Mourning. In many other instances, such as with the fugitives of the Black Pit, Breland's armies simply lacked the capacity to patrol the country's entire border—let alone its massive interior—for those they would rather expel. Legitimate or not, the fact that so many of the nation's current problems are caused, or at least exacerbated, by wartime fugitives has ignited a spark of xenophobic prejudice in the outlying communities of this normally cosmopolitan nation.

BRELAND TODAY

Where other "hot spots" are the pivot points between multiple nations, or are torn by struggle between large factions, Breland's issues come primarily from smaller sources that have been allowed to grow unchecked. The sudden eruption of war isn't the danger here—or at least not the primary one. Instead, Breland stands at risk of being eaten away from within, like a body riddled with disease, until there is little left worth fighting over. Every faction, group, and nation discussed herein causes problems for, or competes with, Breland on an informal level.

North Border Militants: Breland and Aundair did not engage in extensive campaigns against each other, but members of both populations still raise their hackles at the mention of the other. This is particularly true of Aundairians and Reachers near the borders, whose national pride and tales of Brelish invasions early in the war have kept the coals of anger stoked. On occasion, agitators, from old soldiers to teenage punks, steal across the border and rob, vandalize, or torch Brelish communities and caravans. To date, King Boranel hasn't increased military presence on the border, hoping not to offend Breland's relatively nonhostile northern neighbors (unlike those to the east and west), but the people who dwell near the border are demanding action. It might be only a matter of time until Brelish citizens launch "counterattacks" into Aundair or the Reaches.

Bandits and the Black Highway: Breland has an enormous amount of active banditry for a civilized kingdom. The crime rate in its large cities (particularly Sharn) is high, and the roads are beset by highwaymen. Although many of these bandits are ex-soldiers with no other career skills, or the usual mix of the desperate and the violent, a large portion of Breland's bandit population is made up of wartime fugitives. Some are Cyran survivors, lacking any other means of survival or simply enraged at the world that destroyed their home and left them with nothing. Others are deserters from neighboring militias, unable to go home. Banditry is most severe near the centers of fugitive population—the Black Pit, the King's Forest near the Zilargo border, and the smaller communities around New Cyre, for instance—but it is a nationwide problem.

The large criminal population, combined with the cosmopolitan attraction of the big cities and the small towns of fugitives with little to lose, have combined to form a thriving black-market network throughout Breland (see The Black Highway, page 56). Criminals and unscrupulous merchants from other nations and various houses come here to find illicit goods they cannot acquire elsewhere, feeding money into the criminal underground and often sparking additional violence.

Darguun and Droaam: Breland's military and citizens face the same problem from the east and west: specifically, incursion by the goblinoid and monstrous populations of Darguun and Droaam. True acts of war by these neighbors would almost be welcome in Breland; the nation could then bring military and diplomatic weight to bear against them. The truth is, neither of the nascent governments of Darguun or Droaam wants war with Breland or has any (overt) hostile intentions. The "invasions" are the work of renegade bands, soldiers, and marauders who respect carnage and plunder more than they do the feeble laws of their new governments. Unsurprisingly, Breland's government sees these attacks as far more dangerous than the political vandalism that occurs in the north, and King Boranel has moved units of both standard soldiers and Redcloaks into position along both borders.

Karrnathi Warlords: Relations between Breland and Karrnath are strained but largely peaceful. Boranel and Kaius have exchanged hostages, and their nations have embarked on a tentative but growing set of trade arrangements. The two are not conveniently located, but given the antipathy toward Karrnath by Aundair and Thrane, Breland seems to be the Karrns' only viable partner.

Not all of Karrnath's warlords are happy with their king's push for peace, however. In violation of Kaius's dictates, several of them continue to harass other nations. Most direct their attention toward their neighbors, but Warlord Stavos Sattler (LE male halfling knight$^{\text{PH2}}$ 4) seems determined to prevent the growth of any further friendship between Karrnath and Breland. On four separate occasions, Breland has been attacked from the Mournland by forces that resemble Karrnathi undead cavalry, and clandestine Karrnathi units periodically operate in Brelish lands (as they did at times during the war).

The Mournland: Despite the threats posed at the Darguun and Droaamish borders, a significant Brelish military presence patrols the borders of the dead-gray mist. Its official duty is to guard against the myriad horrors that occasionally emerge from the blasted wasteland of the Mournland, but it has a second, less publicized purpose: to watch for evidence that the devastation is about to repeat itself. Of all the possible fates for his kingdom, Boranel most fears a Cyrelike destruction.

Despite the fact that other nations have much larger borders with the Mournland, Breland suffers the greatest number of monstrous incursions. Some citizens blame the presence of New Cyre, theorizing that whatever caused the Day of Mourning seeks to finish the job.

New Cyre: This city seems to be a magnet for trouble. As mentioned, some Brelish blame its citizens for the influx of monsters from the Mournland. Others accuse the city of harboring bandits, since so many Cyran refugees have turned to crime out of desperation. Still others begrudge the people of New Cyre their lands and jobs; even Breland, though relatively prosperous, has its poor and destitute.

For their part, many New Cyrans are grateful for their new home, others are resentful of the common Brelish attitude toward them, and still others haven't forgotten that Breland was one of the aggressors at the start of the war. It wouldn't take more than a single large riot or upheaval to hurl the entire city into civil unrest.

Lord Ruken ir'Clarn: Potentially the greatest threat to Breland's status quo comes from within its own government. Lord Ruken leads a cabal of both noble and elected officials who seek to end the Brelish monarchy, replacing it with a democratically elected parliament—with him at its head. He and his allies, with secret support from Queen Aurala of Aundair, reassign troops and resources to weaken King Boranel's influence and reputation. If any of the aforementioned potential crises reaches the point where it requires swift government action, these conspirators could conceivably plunge the entire nation into chaos through simple procrastination. (For more on Ruken ir'Clarn [LE male human aristocrat 2], see *Five Nations* 53.)

Dragonmarked Houses

It would be woefully inaccurate to say that the dragonmarked houses discussed here—Ghallanda, Kundarak, Medani, Orien, Sivis, and Vadalis—were unaffected, or didn't take steps to thrive, during the dark days of the Last War. Still, these houses had a dramatically smaller impact on the war—and vice versa—than covered here in individual entries (see House Cannith, page 64; House Deneith, page 66; House Jorasco, page 67; House Lyrandar, page 69; Houses Phiarlan and Thuranni, page 71; House Tharashk, page 72).

HOUSE GHALLANDA

The outbreak of hostilities saw a drop in patronage at Ghallanda's establishments, as soldiers moved out to the front, and frightened people locked themselves in their homes. When it became clear that the conflict would run long, however, those who could afford to do so took every opportunity to eat and drink out, enjoying the peaceful and happy moments as well as they could. Many of the halfling hosts granted special rates to soldiers of all nations, for few eat and drink so heartily as a warrior on leave. What could have proved incredibly profitable, however, instead resulted in only modest gains, as the drains of the war on national resources prevented the house from acquiring supplies, drinks, and foodstuffs in the quantities, or at the prices, it desired.

Many House Ghallanda establishments served as meeting places for spies and fugitives throughout the war. Even on those rare occasions when a government was prepared to order its troops into the house's holdings, the soldiers on the line were never eager to upset those who provided them with their only real escape from the war.

HOUSE KUNDARAK

In the early years, the war was good for House Kundarak. Galifar's wealthy stored enormous amounts of monies, heirlooms, works of art, and other valuables in Kundarak's vaults, seeking to protect them from pillaging invaders. Although Kundarak was the intended victim of several military raids, the dwarves had the best protection money could buy. They also quickly made it clear that any power that attacked them would be denied loans or economic aid. As such, the warring nations informally but unanimously declared Kundarak, even more so than most of the other houses, to be a neutral noncombatant.

Eventually, however, Kundarak's resources dwindled. Nations and other houses came to the house for loans, or removed goods and monies from storage. Debts went unpaid as countries turned their resources to more immediate concerns. Though it would be hyperbole to claim that Kundarak was in danger of destitution, by the end of the war, the house's worth was less than half of what it had been at the start.

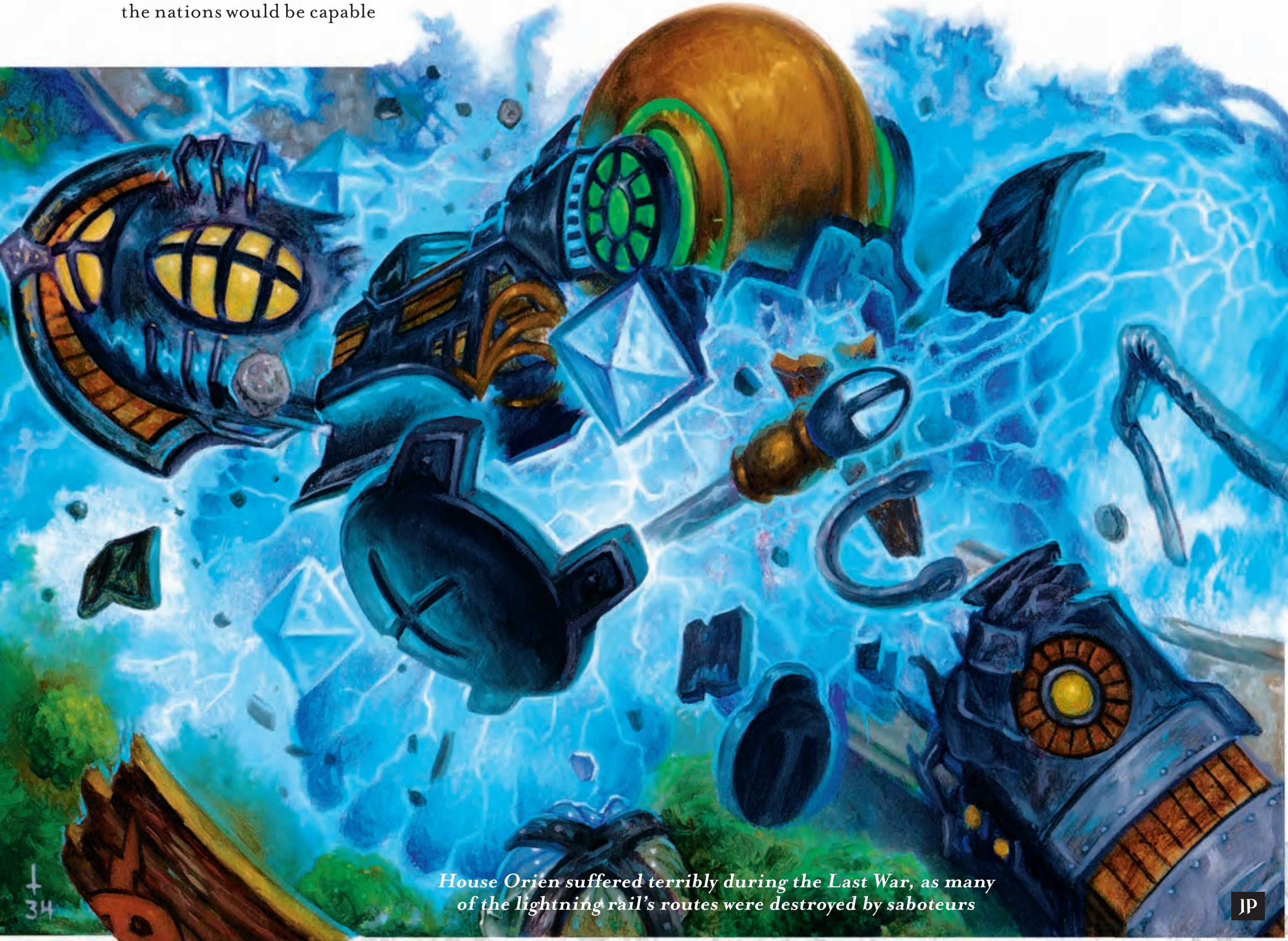
Still, most Kundarak dwarves celebrate the Last War for providing them the opportunity to escape the shadow of human rule. With Galifar shattered, and the military of Karrnath occupied elsewhere, the Mror Holds were able to announce their independence in 914 and maintain it throughout the war.

Kundara k still holds an enormous number of war debts from the Five Nations and other countries involved in the Last War. To date, the dwarves have not called in those debts—not that most of the nations would be capable of paying anyway. Instead, they use those standing debts as a means of influence, occasionally "requesting" favors from various governments. Although it is never spoken, everyone understands that Kundarak could destroy whole economies should the governments not give serious attention to the house's requests.

HOUSE MEDANI

If any house truly violated the edicts of neutrality during the Last War, it was House Medani. It's an open secret that the Medani half-elves used their skills and connections to gather intelligence for Breland. This alliance only grew stronger in the war's later years, as Baron Trelib (NG male half-elf rogue 7/master inquisitive 2) developed a close relationship with King Boranel. This association caused Trelib no few problems, because forces loyal to the other nations—and even to other houses, who worried that Medani's actions would reflect poorly on them—attacked and ransacked Medani holdings. These raids were always disguised to look like random looting, but everyone involved knew what message was being sent.

What the casual student of history might not realize is that although Medani is most well known for aiding Brelish intelligence, most of its efforts were not devoted directly to the war. As is the case in all major conflicts, many unscrupulous individuals used the Last War as an opportunity for



House Orien suffered terribly during the Last War, as many of the lightning rail's routes were destroyed by saboteurs profit. Thieves' guilds and criminal gangs looted estates and government installations, knowing that the forces normally assigned to security were instead on the front lines. Further, every nation produced its share of war criminals, individuals responsible for such atrocities that even their own governments disavowed their activities. Both private citizens and overworked military officers needed someone to track down these malfeasants. House Deneith might be known for its law-enforcement work, but when the victims of these crimes needed to locate hidden criminals—or when Deneith was too busy on the battlefield—it was the investigators and spies of Medani to whom they turned. To this day, Medani maintains a cadre of investigators—the Basilisk's Gaze, led by the eccentric Taldor d'Medani (LN male half-elf rogue 5)—whose sole purpose is to track down war criminals and terrorists who have not yet paid for their actions during the Last War.

HOUSE ORIEN

Orien might have suffered most, in terms of economics and influence, of all the dragonmarked houses, but even for it, the war was initially profitable. As the warring provinces moved soldiers and materiel cross-country to the front lines, House Orien was often tasked with aiding in those endeavors. And this the house did, assisting all factions and nations equally (assuming they could pay). Orien received substantial income from Khorvaire's civilians as well, as they fled from the front lines or moved belongings away from areas of danger. Orien began investigating ways of expanding its ability to carry freight and passengers. These projects included larger lightning rails, self-propelled wagons, and even a lightning rail car capable of laying its own track of conductor stones by means of short-range teleportation, but none of these effort had gotten past the design stage when the house's financial foundation crumbled.

Orien's rails and trade routes took damage throughout the war. The first major loss was the White Arch Bridge over Scions Sound, but this was far from the last. Although Orien's routes were usually victims of collateral damage—Kaius ordered the first destruction of the White Arch Bridge to prevent invasion by Aundair, for instance—some attacks were aimed at Orien directly. In one infamous incident, soldiers of Thrane obliterated an entire lightning rail station when they learned that a member of the rail's staff had been bribed to pass military secrets on to Breland.

The Mourning cemented Orien's downfall—an enormous portion of the lightning rail network was obliterated in one fell swoop. In recent months, the house has secretly gathered a large number of artificers, magewrights, wizards, and crafters, even granting safe haven to skilled fugitives in exchange for assistance. Orien seeks some means of either restoring the lightning rail, or creating a comparable vehicle that isn't bound to a track, but it does not wish to draw on the expertise or resources of other houses or nations to do so. Ultimately, this endeavor could make or break its efforts at regaining its place as one of the greatest houses.

HOUSE SIVIS

The gnomes of Sivis were considered heroes by most Khorvairians, due to their actions in the war, though that goodwill is already fading as people once again allow the House of the Written Word to fade into the cultural background. Khorvaire is a large place, and though all warring factions had intricate networks of spies, their intelligence was for the ears of generals and kings, not the common man. It was the mystical prowess and creations of Sivis—*speaking stones*, transcribing quills, papers readable only by the intended recipient and resistant to damage, and the like—that allowed citizens to keep abreast of events, and soldiers to keep in contact with their loved ones.

Sivis was more than a passive participant, of course. Every nation needed to send swift and secret messages from the front to the interior and back, and each made use of House Sivis to do so. Some merely purchased additional quantities of Sivis-created items, but others hired communicators and messengers from the house itself. Rumors yet linger of Sivis members who were captured and tortured by various nations, in hopes of prying enemy secrets from them.

For Sivis, the war proved profitable in the long-term in ways that its more martial counterparts could never have anticipated. Because House Sivis carried secrets and messages for all Five Nations, it now possesses knowledge that the various governments wish to keep hidden. This situation grants House Sivis some degree of political leverage, though the gnomes are wise enough not to press the issue. After all, revealing those secrets would destroy the house's reputation and might even provoke an overt attack. Through careful manipulation and subtle reminders of what it knows, however, it can squeeze better deals and arrangements out of otherwise recalcitrant clients.

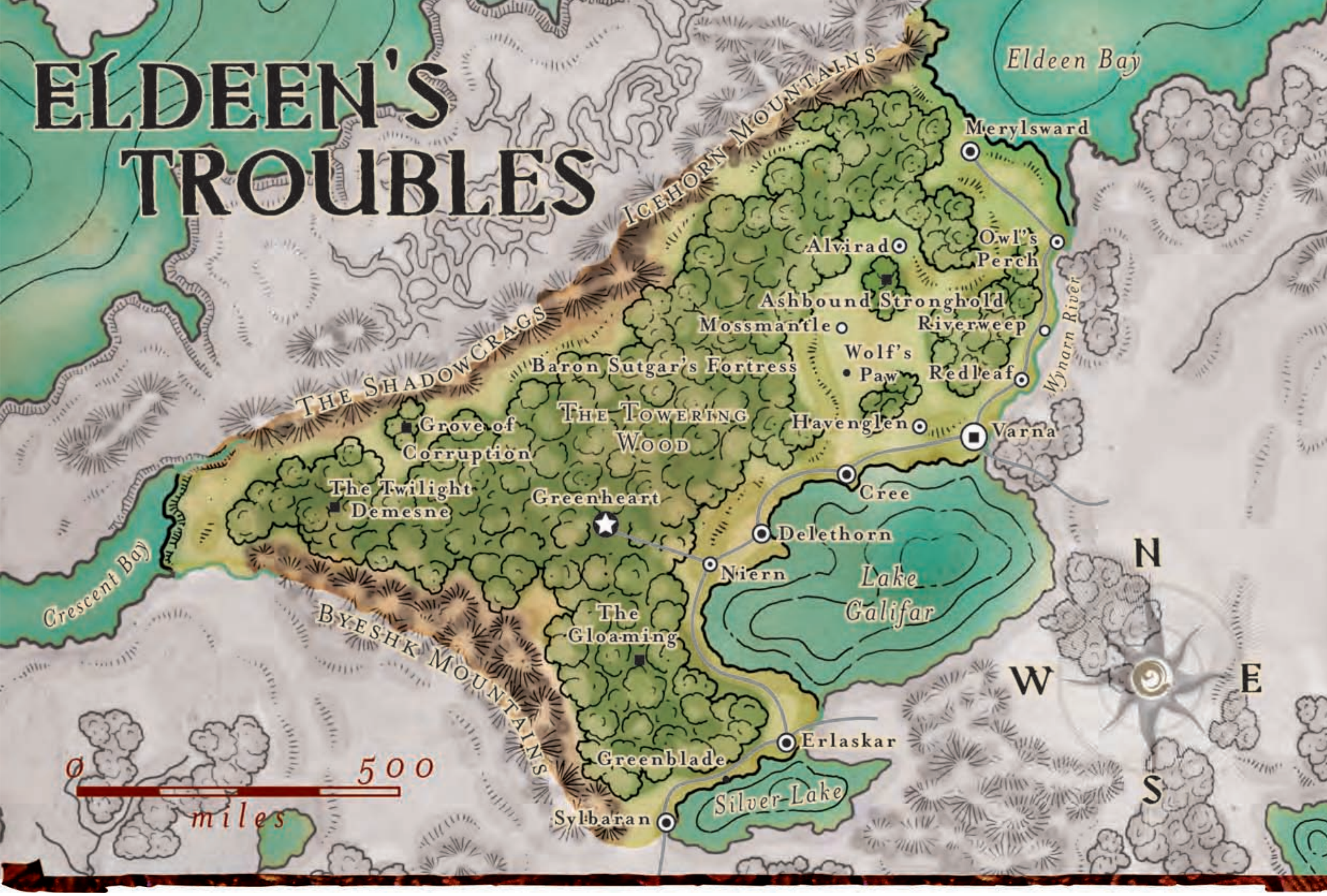
HOUSE VADALIS

When the war began, Vadalis dispatched scouts and hunters to the far corners of Khorvaire. Although the house had been long known for its magebred animals, the barons knew that a long-term conflict would bring with it all manner of bizarre needs and requests, and they were determined to meet them all. Through combinations of wild hunts and the occasional trade or purchase with natives, Vadalis acquired eggs, calves, and mating-age specimens of all manner of exotic beasts.

Throughout the conflict, the warring nations approached the house with a variety of odd requests, and Vadalis delivered results ranging from magebred warhorses for heavy cavalry to griffons trained for aerial reconnaissance and war, and from human-hunting dire wolves to bulettes trained to dig under the walls of fortifications. Even the rare dinosaur was not beyond the house's ability to train and deliver, for the right price. Few people think of House Vadalis when they consider the Last War, but—like the beasts of burden employed throughout Khorvaire—its contributions were indispensable.

ELDEEN REACHES

If violence does indeed beget violence, war must beget war. Nowhere is this point more obvious than in the Eldeen Reaches. Like sparks cast off from a burning forest fire, embers of the Last War have come to rest here. Although the larger conflagration has been extinguished, each of its lingering flames threatens to erupt into a brand new blaze. Whether foreign agitators stirring up trouble, conflicting druid sects, rival bandit leaders, scheming politicians, or any number of other flashpoints, the threats facing the


ELDEEN'S TROUBLES

Eldeen Bay
Icehorn Mountains
Merylsward
Alvirad
Owl's Perch
Ashbound Stronghold
Mossmantle
Riverweep
Wynarn River
Wolf's Paw
Redleaf
The Shadowcrags
Baron Sutgar's Fortress
Grove of Corruption
The Towering Wood
Havenglen
Varna
Cree
The Twilight Demesne
Greenheart
Delethorn
Niern
Lake Galifar
Crescent Bay
Byeshk Mountains
The Gloaming
N
W
E
S
Erlaskar
Greenblade
0
500
miles
Silver Lake
Sylbaran

Eldeen Reaches might be more subtle now than they once were, but they remain just as potent.

THE ELDEEN REACHES AT WAR

Eldeen saw its share of conflict even before the commencement of the Last War. The various druid sects clashed with one another, native druids and shifters fought against Aundairian settlers, and everyone feared the aberrations and Khyber cultists of the Demon Wastes. Still, large-scale conflict was relatively rare, particularly given the looming presence of Aundair's military, watching from the Wynarn River, and the personal magnetism of Prince Wrogar.

All that changed early in the Last War. Aundair moved the bulk of its forces east and south. Almost immediately, the tensions that had long simmered beneath the surface of the Eldeen Reaches began to boil over—but before they could erupt into violence, outside forces arrived. Large groups of bandits moved into the newly vulnerable territories, stealing much from people who already had little. How many of these bandits were truly independent, and how many were in fact encouraged and supported by Karrnath, the Lhazaar Principalities, or Breland, remains unclear. Brelish military forces advanced into the southern territories, occupying Erlaskar, Greenblade, and Sylbaran. Karrnath seeded portions of the woods with undead soldiers, convincing several of the druid sects that rival cabals had crossed the line into truly unnatural magic. Many a plea for help was dispatched to the Aundairian throne. None were answered, for soldiers were more desperately needed elsewhere.

Native factions took advantage of the incursions for their own ends. The Ashbound destroyed several border villages in attacks that were blamed, at first, on bandit activity. The Children of Winter struck against the larger druid sects, goaded into action by hidden instigators who secretly served Cults of the Dragon Below. Indeed, at times it seemed that the Eldeen Reaches had as many warring factions within its borders as in the rest of the continent combined.

It took the Wardens of the Wood until 956 to squelch the worst of the conflicts between the druid sects and bring most (though not nearly all) of the squabbling cabals in line. Once that was done, the Wardens emerged from the Towering Wood and rallied the beleaguered villagers against bandits and foreign agitators. The people, angry at Aundair for abandoning them, were quick to declare fealty to the Great Druid and the Wardens of the Wood, once independence was declared. The Aundairian crown, which had refused to send troops to aid the Reachers, decried this betrayal and assembled a force of reserves sufficient to invade the "rebellious" territory. Aundair's efforts were too little too late, however.

Several modern historians believe that Karrnathi agitators might have been present during the routing of the bandit lords, and might have worked to convince many undecided Reachers that declaring independence from Aundair was the right choice. Indeed, several minor battles between the two nations were decided in Karrnath's favor due to Aundair's reduction of troops while it attempted to retake the Reaches.

THE ELDEEN REACHES TODAY

The end of the Last War and the recognition of the Eldeen Reaches as a sovereign territory dampened the flames of conflict, but it didn't extinguish them. Almost every struggle that began during the war continues, albeit under the surface. Bandits and robber barons still plague the eastern lands, and more than one such group has clandestine backing from Aundair or Breland. The Ashbound launch attacks over the border into Aundair and Breland, terrorize natives, and work against the interests of the Wardens of the Wood. The Children of Winter, too, struggle against the Wardens, and all the sects are plagued by aberrations and those loyal to Khyber. Adventurers in the Eldeen Reaches see plenty of combat action, but they are far more likely to fall victim to the hidden political machinations of the region's sects and factions. With no meaningful central government, the Eldeen Reaches certainly has more than its share of intrigue.

Factions

To truly understand the conflicts that ravage the Eldeen Reaches, one must identify the major factions. Not every group involved in these ongoing struggles is discussed here, only those that are major instigators, or otherwise central to ongoing events.

Ashbound: Although the Ashbound is neither the largest nor oldest druid sect in the Towering Wood, its actions have an impact on the region far in excess of its size. The sect's enmity toward arcane magic-users not only inspires its members to attack travelers, merchants, and emissaries within the Reaches' borders, but emboldens them to launch frequent raids and attacks at Aundair proper. They have caused localized famine and flood by manipulating the weather, wreaked havoc with summoned elementals, and infested villages with hordes of vermin. Though Aundair has not, to date, been willing to commit its forces to retaking the eastern Reaches, the actions of the Ashbound might eventually grant it the perfect excuse to do so: self-defense.

Aundair: The nation of Aundair as a whole, and many of its leaders in particular, would dearly love to reclaim the Eldeen Reaches. At issue is a prize even greater than the rich, fertile eastern lands that would do wonders for the nation's economy and food supply—the matter of national honor. The Aundairians are a proud people, many of whom are displeased with the results of the Treaty of Thronehold. The bulk of patriotic rhetoric is directed at retaking Thaliost from Karrnath, but holding sway over the Eldeen Reaches runs a close second: Many Aundairians want the lands west of the Wynarn once again under their control. These attitudes are embodied on a governmental level by Lord Darro ir'Lain (LN male human wizard 6/knight phantom 6; see *Five Nations* 17), who wishes to reclaim the Eldeen Reaches as a means of toughening up the military. In the streets, the rallying cry is led by the Aundair Agrarian Association, a socio-political group whose current leader, Pallatra Kresk (LN female human aristocrat 4), sees the reclamation of Eldeen as vital to the nation's survival. While this group isn't nearly as zealous, and certainly not as violent, as the Scions Liberation Front (page 94), it is a potent political force that could yet prove capable of swaying the government to its point of view.

The fact that no official state of conflict exists between Aundair and the Eldeen Reaches doesn't mean blood isn't shed. Although rare, skirmishes do erupt between Aundairian communities on one side of the Wynarn, and Reachers on the other, as nationalist dogma or simple resentment boils over. Not all of this aggression comes from the Aundairian side of the border. Several Reacher agitators enjoy stirring up umbrage in their own villages, or crossing the border to cause difficulties for the government that "abandoned" them. The most famous of these is the half-elf bard Briar, currently a "guest" of Dreadhold Prison, but his apprentice Erza (CN female half-elf ranger 1/bard 6) and plenty of other admirers are eager to take up his banner.

Baron Sutger: Of the roughly two dozen sizable bandit groups and communities still operating within the Eldeen Reaches, the largest and most skilled is the army of Sutger, self-styled "Baron of Moss." Sutger (NE male human scout$^{\text{CAd}}$ 8) keeps a hidden forest estate somewhere in the Towering Wood and commands a retinue of over a hundred bandits and woodsmen. The baron's soldiers waylay travelers, accept payment from outsiders to disrupt both Reacher and Aundairian communities, and have even been known to kidnap members of druid sects for ransom. Sutger has begun hunting down the region's other bandits, bringing them under his rule or at least intimidating them into paying tribute. If left unchecked, it's possible that Baron Sutger might succeed in establishing a "bandit empire" throughout the Eldeen Reaches large enough to rival any of the legitimate factions or governments.

Wardens of the Wood: The Wardens are stretched thin, attempting to keep things together in the Eldeen Reaches. The sect is large and powerful—but neither so large nor so powerful as it wishes others to believe. The challenges posed by rival druid sects are draining the Wardens' resources far more than they let on. So far, they have managed to keep Aundair and other governments out of the Eldeen Reaches through threats of reprisal, but eventually those threats might prove to be insufficient. If that day comes, the Wardens are uncertain if they'll be able to produce the power necessary to prove that their promises of violence are anything more than an empty bluff.

HOUSE CANNITH

Few institutions profited from the Last War more than the makers of House Cannith. Already the driving force behind the creation of magic and tools across Galifar, it readily rose to meet the challenges and opportunities of war, providing weapons and equipment to all while acknowledging loyalty to none. As is so often the case in Khorvaire, however, fortune turned to disaster, and those who had gained much from the war found themselves no less shattered at its end than Galifar itself.

IN THE BEGINNING

Cannith's leaders knew the Last War was coming before almost anyone else, even if they didn't comprehend how all-encompassing it would become. When Thalin, Kaius, and Wroann challenged Mishann's succession, the siblings all arrived with armed soldiers—a clear sign of their readiness for war. Even before Galifar's fall, no province went to war without stockpiling materiel both mundane and magical, and that meant dealing with House Cannith. Merrix d'Cannith the Elder and other leaders recognized almost immediately what must result from such a course of action, and Cannith geared up for production on an unprecedented scale. When the Last War erupted in earnest, the house was prepared to meet the demand.

In fact, House Cannith did not wait for each of the soon-to-be-nations to come to it. Immediately after the commencement of hostilities, Cannith offered its services to Cyre and Aundair, that they might meet the challenge of the other nations. So furious was Kaius of Karrnath at this perceived "treason" that some historians believe he might have turned the military might of his nation against House Cannith if he could have spared the forces. Cannith, however, maintained—as it did throughout the war—that it served Galifar as a whole, not any one of its component parts, and that it would continue to provide aid to all involved in order to "maintain the stability of the region." That its true purpose was profit was no secret, but none of the five factions could afford to alienate the house by arguing the point.

Though Cannith is best known for its magic machines of war and the warforged themselves, the house's early contributions to the conflict took the form of mass production of mundane items. Through the use of semianimate tools and magic forges, Calenzo d'Cannith pioneered the creation of weapons, armor, and minor alchemical items in a fraction of the time it would have taken a humanoid smith, magewright, or alchemist to do the same. These items were of passing quality at best, but they were cheap and they were available in quantity—both vital points to nations gearing up and maintaining a war effort. It was with the obscene profits generated by this mass production that House Cannith begin the development of more potent mystical weapons.

WAR MACHINES

In the early years, House Cannith had not yet developed a specific vision for its wartime creations, and its efforts were spread across a variety of methods and techniques. The creation of the warforged titan in the middle war years would eventually lead Cannith down the path toward the true warforged, but that was far from the house's only development. In a faint foreshadowing of the great schism to come, Cannith's creative efforts divided the house informally into three separate factions.

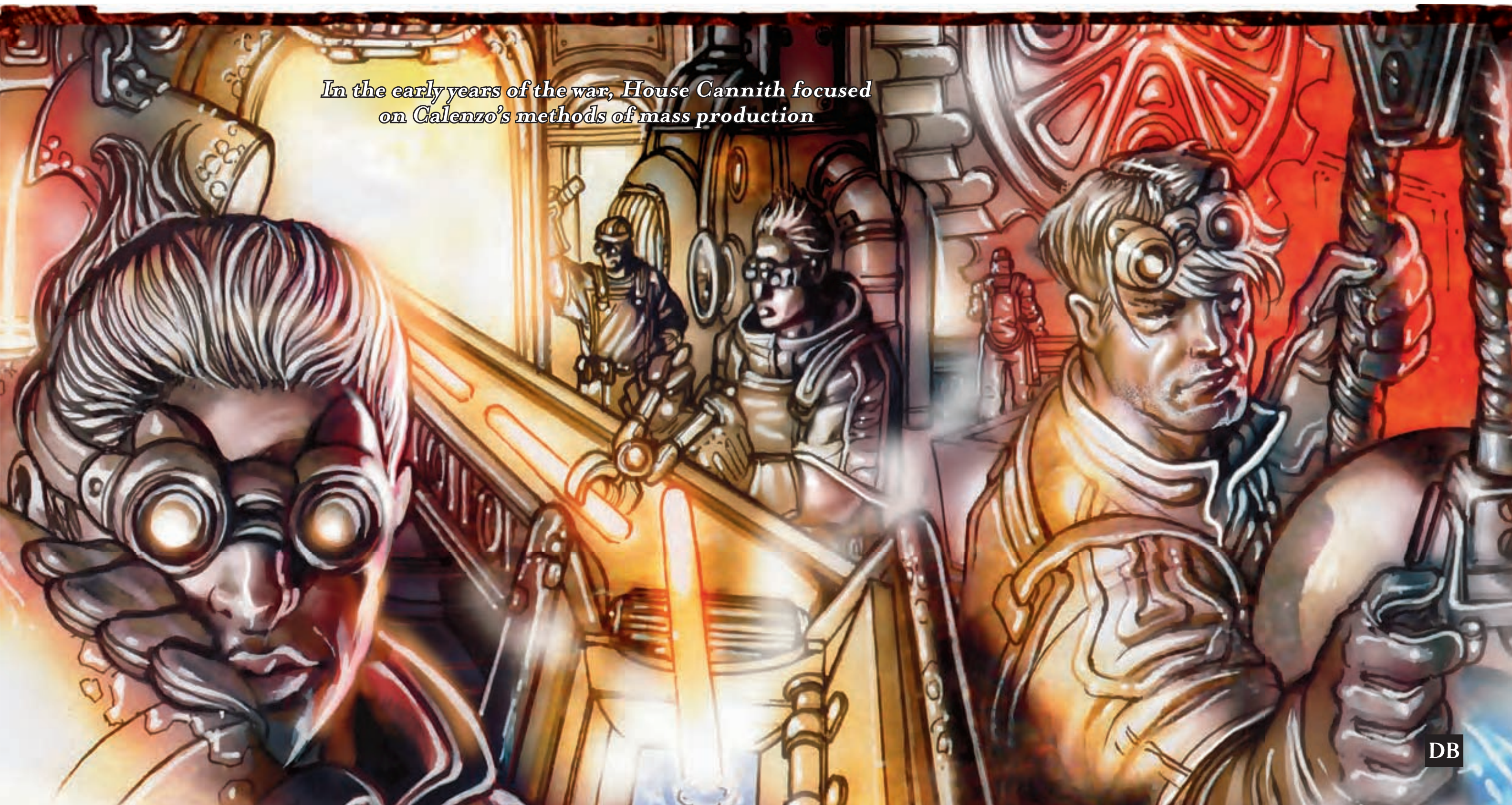
The first, led by Calenzo, focused on individual tools and weapons even after moving beyond mass production of the mundane. From their efforts came creations such as *eternal wands,* self-loading crossbows, strength- and speed-enhancing armor, and even the dancing property (*DMG* 224) found on weapons in the modern era.

Merrix's interest—and, by extension, the direction in which the house eventually turned as a whole—was in the creation of animated machines of war. The warforged titan was the most well-known early product of this interest, but others such as the runic guardian^{MM2} and the steel kraken (*Five Nations* 93) sprang from this effort as well. For a time, Merrix experimented with animated siege engines (such as the siege golem, *Cityscape* 126). Although popular with a few generals, they were too limited in use compared to the warforged titan to gain widespread acceptance (and to produce steady revenue).

The smallest group focused on creating vehicles of war. Led by Lirisa d'Cannith, it manufactured clockwork and golemlike steeds, mobile structures, and the *apparatus of Kwalish* (named for an ancient wizard whom Lirisa greatly admired). Several of Lirisa's descendants have sworn that it was, in fact, one of her designs that eventually led to the creation of Argonth (page 45) and the other mobile fortresses active during the war.

THE FINAL DAYS

House Cannith enjoyed heady days from the midpoint to the end of the Last War. Through financial and mercantile channels, the house sold millions of gold pieces worth of equipment and weapons to each warring nation, as well as to various nobles and private mercenary companies. Merrix and the other leaders funneled much of those monies back into the development of newer and



In the early years of the war, House Cannith focused on Calenzo's methods of mass production more potent creations, but more than enough was left for the house to thrive. By the end of the war, House Cannith was wealthier than any of Khorvaire's nations.

The flow of income increased further when Aaren d'Cannith, son of Merrix, created the first true warforged. Aaren sought simply to understand the mysteries of life, but it was his aged father who saw the value of the discovery to the war effort. He instantly co-opted his son's creation and offered the warforged as soldiers to the weary nations. Development of other new inventions slowed, though it never ceased entirely, so that the house might devote the bulk of its resources to creating more warforged. Most of the warforged manufactured at this time were roughly human in shape, though halfling-sized warforged scouts appeared in the last years of the war, and rumors tell of ogre-sized and larger warforged hidden away to be used as last-ditch weapons.

As to what the house was developing, nobody can say for certain. Some rumors suggest Merrix the Younger had ordered the creation of warforged that, though sentient, could be implanted with specific personality traits or obedience to a particular cause. Others claim that Cannith was working on building warforged of nonhuman forms, such as animals, monsters, and even dragons. Still others maintain that Cannith had proceeded as far in warforged development as it intended, and was working instead on the artificial creation of truly living creatures, made of flesh and bone but possessing strange mystical abilities.

Whatever the truth, it never came to fruition. Cannith lost more than its ongoing experiments on the Day of Mourning. It lost hundreds of skilled members, the results of decades of experiments, and millions of gold pieces worth of equipment and material.

Cannith's glory days were over. Although the Treaty of Thronehold would not come for two more years, talk that the Day of Mourning would spell the end of the Last War began immediately. Through their various political connections and mercantile interests, the leaders of Cannith supported those who sought to continue the war and to prevent the signing of any treaty. It soon became clear that the proponents of peace would not be denied. With the end of the war in sight, demand for Cannith's weapons and equipment dropped off, and without that flow of income, the house couldn't hope to rebuild quickly. Its actions might have extended the Last War a bit, but they weren't remotely sufficient to undermine the peace movement.

The house might have been more successful if it had been able to coordinate its efforts. In addition to the aforementioned losses, the Day of Mourning cost House Cannith the life of its patriarch. Unable to settle on a successor, Cannith followed Galifar into schism, resulting in the three primary factions—Merrix the Younger's Cannith South, Jorlanna's Cannith West, and Zorlan's Cannith East—that exist today.

CANNITH TODAY

Though Cannith is still one of the most powerful and wealthiest dragonmarked houses, it is a shadow of what it once was. By forbidding the creation of new warforged, and granting existing ones the rights of sentient races, the Treaty of Thronehold essentially stripped Cannith of its primary revenue stream. The further division of Cannith resources into three factions has all but guaranteed that no one of them can ever regain the heights once enjoyed by the entire house.

Since the end of the war, Cannith's members have maintained their reputation as makers and builders, but have also acquired a degree of disdain, as people who suffered during the war have turned their anger against those who built the war's greatest weapons. To this day, rumors persist that Merrix d'Cannith maintains a secret creation forge with warforged slaves, and that he routinely sends teams into the Mournland in hopes of excavating the Cannith secrets buried there.

Perhaps most damaging to Cannith South, and to the house as a whole, is the fact that Cannith is one of the few entities that can legitimately look back on the war as the "good old days." Only a resumption of hostilities would truly allow it to regain what it once had, and although no solid evidence exists to support this view, a great many people believe that none of the three faction leaders is above trying to instigate a new conflict for that purpose.

HOUSE DENEITH

The humans who carry the Mark of Sentinel have long been the foremost suppliers of mercenaries and security forces for the Five Nations of Khorvaire. During the united rule of Galifar, the Blademarks Guild of House Deneith provided warriors to supplement the forces of city guards and local militias. After the outbreak of war among the Five Nations, House Deneith was thrust into a precarious situation: Its services were more in demand than ever, but it could not provide those services to all that xdesired them without sending mercenaries to fight each other. Taken to an extreme, the Last War could have evolved into a conflict fought entirely by opposing groups of Deneith mercenaries. Even in the absence of that extreme case, House Deneith was hard-pressed to avoid the same kind of schism that tore House Phiarlan into two houses.

IN THE BEGINNING

The start of the Last War was so lucrative for House Deneith that some have accused the house of helping to start the conflict—accusations that appear to be baseless. It is clear, however, that at least some members of House Deneith had early knowledge of the war: As Thalin, Kaius, and Wroann prepared their challenge to Mishann's succession, they began marshaling troops. Before they purchased arms from House Cannith and before they hired Jorasco healers, the rebellious leaders began mobilizing their own forces—which already included Deneith mercenaries. As preparations continued, they bolstered their armies with Deneith soldiers, armed them with Cannith weapons, and supported them with Jorasco healers, and money began flowing into the coffers of all these dragonmarked houses.

Conflicts within House Deneith began almost immediately. While the Blademarks Guild began amassing enormous profits from this new demand for its services, the Sentinel Marshals embodied the rule of law in a united Galifar; as a group, they opposed the outbreak of war and sought ceaselessly for a peaceful resolution to the question of succession. This dedication to peace won the Marshals many enemies, however. Sentinel Marshal Brashin d'Deneith, an outspoken advocate of peace and a tireless diplomat, was assassinated six months after

Jarot's death, an event some historians describe as bringing about the end of any hope for averting the war. Some also suspect that members of the Blademarks Guild were responsible for Brashin's death.

Once the war began in earnest, however, the Sentinel Marshals made the best of a bad situation—or perhaps Brashin's assassination brought them around to a more pragmatic point of view. In either case, they began reinventing their role in a world that was changing dramatically, shaping themselves into the international police force that they remain to this day. They monitored the conduct of the war and challenged nations and commanders who violated what few accepted standards there were regarding such actions as the treatment of prisoners of war, the targeting of civilians, war profiteering, and the neutrality of the dragonmarked houses.

Meanwhile, the Blademarks Guild was struggling to maintain its neutrality among the sharply polarized realms of Khorvaire. The official position of House Deneith was to provide mercenaries to any nation that paid for them. As new kingdoms declared their independence from the Five Nations, House Deneith opened accounts for them. Deneith commanders serving with national armies stayed willfully ignorant of the larger plans of the allied forces as well as any movement of Deneith forces on opposing sides. By unwritten code, Deneith forces did not engage other Deneith forces on the battlefield, and at least three minor battles during the war ended with only small groups of Deneith mercenaries left on both sides of the conflict.

This policy of strict neutrality allowed Deneith to remain unified (unlike House Phiarlan) while also reaping a tremendous profit as the war dragged on.

THE FINAL DAYS

Two events near the end of the Last War had a significant impact on House Deneith, threatening to reverse the house's financial gains from the war to that point. First, in 969, tens of thousands of hobgoblin mercenaries supposedly loyal to House Deneith turned on their employers in Breland and Cyre, slaughtering the human armies and carving out their own nation of Darguun. House Deneith had originally employed mostly human mercenaries, but since 878 had used ever-increasing numbers of hobgoblins, goblins, and bugbears. The goblin uprising shattered the trust that the Five Nations had placed in House Deneith and threatened to drive it to bankruptcy.

A rapid response from Baron Jannes d'Deneith (father of the current baron) averted disaster. Jannes followed in the footsteps of Lord Cail of his house, who had led the original Deneith expedition across the Seawalls to make contact with the goblinoid tribes, and made peace with the Lhesh Haruuc. He forged an agreement under which Haruuc would continue to provide mercenaries to House Deneith, personally vouching for the loyalty of these troops. The Lhesh made a tidy profit and gained a significant measure of recognition from the other nations of Khorvaire, which was solidified in the Treaty of Thronehold. House Deneith had an uphill battle convincing the other nations to rely on goblinoid mercenaries again after the uprising, but at least it still had troops to fill the ranks of the Blademarks Guild.

The second tremor to rock House Deneith began in 987 and built slowly. In that year, the Daughters of Sora Kell declared the independence of Droaam, forming a nation out of what had been a monster-infested wilderness. Soon thereafter, new mercenaries appeared on the market, their services brokered not by House Deneith but by House Tharashk. The orcs and half-orcs of House Tharashk had an easier time negotiating the strange culture of the new nation, and they were able to secure a deal that provided gnolls, ogres, war trolls, harpy scouts and couriers, and even hill giants to the warring nations of Khorvaire. In the view of many generals, the disciplined human and hobgoblin soldiers offered by House Deneith could not compete with the brute strength and monstrous savagery of these Droaamish mercenaries.

The entry of House Tharashk into the mercenary trade occurred late in the war, but its impact on the business of House Deneith was nevertheless devastating. Had the war continued, it seems clear that the Blademarks Guild would have lost ground to the Tharashk operations, particularly with House Deneith's low credibility after the Darguun uprising. As it was, much of the profits the Blademarks Guild raked in during the early part of the war dwindled away in its last thirty years, and House Deneith was not the major player that many expected it to be by the war's end.

DENEITH TODAY

There were some within House Deneith who planned their lives around a vision of the house's greatness. Shirin d'Deneith (LE male human rogue 3/fighter 4/dragonmark heir 2) is one such person. The Lord Commander of the Blademarks struggled to restore his guild's credibility in the years after the Darguun uprising, and he has fought tooth and nail against House Tharashk's entry into the mercenary market. He has even allied himself with the Order of the Emerald Claw to solidify his power base and to realize his vision of the house's future. His goal is to use the significant military power of the Blademarks Guild, combined with the Sentinel Marshals, to seize control of Khorvaire and forge a new, united empire ruled by House Deneith. By no means everyone within the house shares Lord Commander Shirin's extreme views, but in a house stung by shame and threatened for the first time by significant competition, he finds many sympathetic ears.

At the same time, the Sentinel Marshals have returned to their traditional role as peacekeepers, upholding the new order established at Thronehold at the end of the war. Part of the Thronehold Accords reaffirmed the Sentinel Marshals' role in enforcing the law across national boundaries, as well as helping to enforce the treaty itself. Sentinel Marshals can now be found across Khorvaire—hunting fugitives from justice, tracking escapees from Dreadhold, and monitoring border clashes and disputes.

HOUSE JORASCO

The House of Healing finds itself in an unusual position when it comes to activities and repercussions of the Last War. The Jorasco halflings not only profited from the Last War while hostilities continued, they benefited even more from the war's aftermath. Of all the houses, only Jorasco can claim that the war was an unqualified economic success.

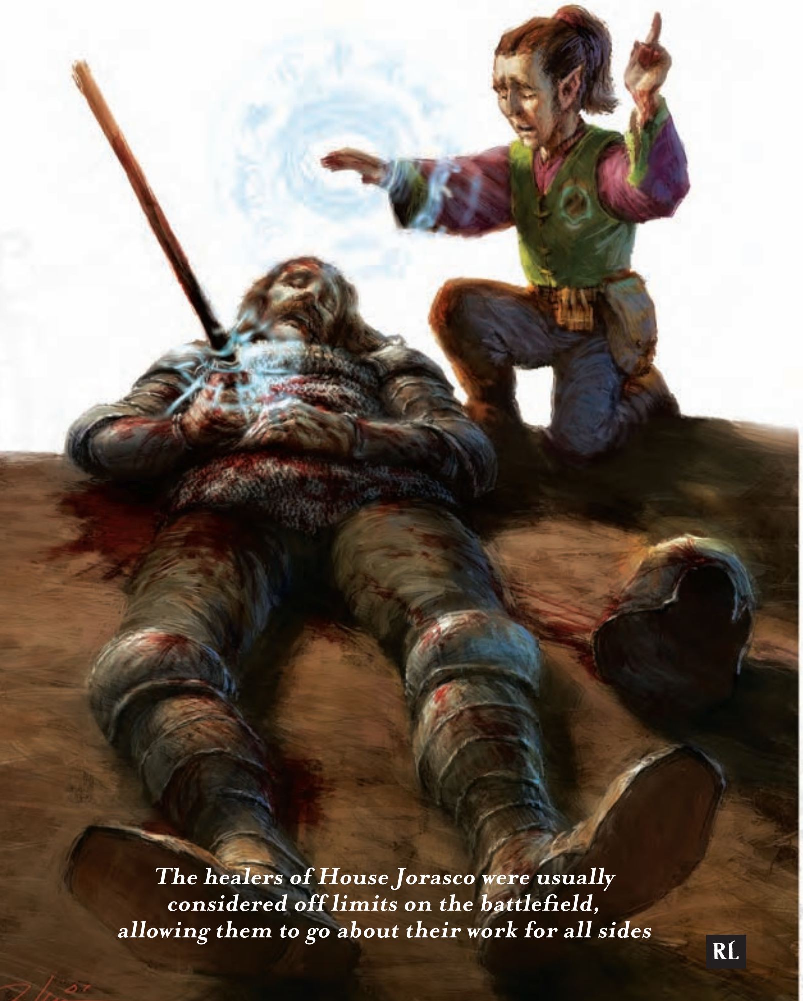
Although House Jorasco cannot complain about its financial status, however, this selfsame success has become a nightmare in terms of popular opinion. The people of Khorvaire have always shared a love-hate relationship with the healers, grateful for their skills but resentful of their refusal to treat those who cannot afford their (often significant) fees. This resentment has only grown in the shadow of the Last War, as House Jorasco rides high on the wealth it has obtained over the past century.

IN THE BEGINNING

The Last War wasn't as surprising to House Jorasco as it was to some others. Though the house had no idea of the scope of the coming conflict, it knew full well that trouble was brewing. Before marching on Thronehold in their attempt to reorder the line of succession, Thalin, Kaius, and Wroann acknowledged the possibility that their actions could lead to war. When they mobilized troops and hired the services of House Cannith, they also enlisted the aid of many of Jorasco's healers, alerting the house to the brewing storm.

The halflings, sensing opportunity, deliberately held back a portion of their personnel so that they could support the other heirs once they, too, began preparations for war. Within months of the Battle of the Galifar Heirs, Jorasco healers had been hired by every territory, region, and ruler involved in the conflict.

The house encountered its first major wartime difficulty within the first year of the war. A small caravan of Jorasco halflings, on their way to rendezvous with their Karrnathi employers, were attacked by a contingent of Aundairian soldiers. Some were slain, and the rest turned back. The success of the Aundairian assault rang in "open season" on Jorasco; soldiers of every nation began treating the healers as just another part of the enemy's supply lines—a resource that, if possible, should be cut.



The healers of House Jorasco were usually considered off limits on the battlefield, allowing them to go about their work for all sides

The leaders of the house reacted with swift fury, sending emissaries to every monarch with the same message: If any soldier attacked a Jorasco halfling, that soldier's nation would be denied the house's services. Though several military leaders argued against capitulating to the house's demands, in the end, every one of the rulers agreed. The Mark of Healing was recognized continentwide as a mark not only of neutrality, but of noncombatant status. As long as a Jorasco halfling stayed out of direct combat, she was not to be harmed.

With these new safeguards in place, the halflings once again deployed to all sides and on every battlefield. The death rate in the house plummeted back to almost normal levels (though the occasional healer still fell to collateral damage), while profits climbed in the face of continuing conflict. While other houses, such as Cannith, set about making economic and political alliances, and experimented on new techniques to profit from the war, House Jorasco simply did what it had always done, raking in gold hand over fist for doing so.

THE FINAL DAYS

For all its profit and all its efforts, House Jorasco found its resources stretched thin toward the end of the war. In order to maintain their presence at the front lines, the halflings withdrew many of their healers from small communities and distant border towns. Injuries and illnesses swept through these "abandoned" territories, causing even those who never saw a day of fighting to feel the horrors of the war. Resentment and distrust of House Jorasco developed in these rural regions, and it continues even to this day. The warring nations, also running low on resources, began to focus the efforts of the house more specifically, hiring it to heal officers or accompany only the most important missions, rather than to provide the more general healing Jorasco had previously supplied.

Despite this tighter focus, however, and the house's recall of more distant members, the halflings couldn't keep up with demand. They increased the cost of their services in order to bring in revenue and allow them to prioritize their efforts. The nations chafed under this added burden, but had little choice other than to pay it. Several nations began looking into alternative sources of healing, and had the war continued longer than it did, it's possible that Jorasco might have found its monopoly on nonreligious healing threatened. (Specifically, several nations attempted to train clerics devoted not to a deity, but to the philosophies of nationalism and patriotism. This would, ostensibly, have granted them the power to heal as capably as clerics of other philosophies, without splitting their loyalties. As of the end of the war, none of the nations had succeeded in these efforts.)

For all the profit the war brought them, the Treaty of Thronehold was a relief to the halflings of Jorasco. Most of them had seen far more bloodshed and suffering than they had ever imagined, and the house leaders were well aware that their position and status were growing shakier by the year. With the end of the war, House Jorasco dramatically dropped the cost of its services and set about trying to bolster its position in the new order by reemphasizing the availability of its skills and abilities.

JORASCO TODAY

House Jorasco has found the aftermath of the war potentially more profitable than the war itself. Some soldiers require long-term care, many war-torn communities are ravaged by disease, and the governments of the Five Nations, even when they prefer not to deal with the dragonmarked houses, lack the resources to tackle these problems on their own. Those who resented the halflings for their actions and prices during the war often have little choice but to turn to them now.

On the other hand, not everyone has been so quick to forgive House Jorasco for its wartime decisions. Particularly in the backwater rural communities, people still feel as though the house abandoned them. In the face of the war, religious practice has experienced a resurgence, and a number of poorer people—never Jorasco's most loyal clientele to begin with—are turning to their faith rather than to the halflings. House Jorasco has never seen a period so profitable as today, but the wisest among the halflings know that their fortune is balanced on a knife's edge, and the slightest ill wind could send it tumbling.

House Lyrandar

Mention the Last War, and most Khorvairians think of House Cannith, or perhaps the mercenaries of Deneith and Tharashk. Fewer folk think instantly of the Mark of the Kraken. In truth, however, House Lyrandar had at least as much of an impact on the war as any other dragonmarked house. Although it might not have profited as heavily, the long-term goals it achieved in those tumultuous years could one day raise the house to the highest position it has ever known.

IN THE BEGINNING

Lyrandar had some slight foreknowledge of the war (though less than Cannith or Jorasco), since various nations hired its ships to move troops and materiel. Most such jobs went to House Orien, however, because of its greater network of overland routes. Thus, Lyrandar barely knew more than "something's coming" when war erupted. Like the other houses, Lyrandar immediately set out to obtain what profit it could from a grim situation, but the early war found the half-elves at a disadvantage. Their elemental galleons were fast and reliable, but they were only moderately in demand; most transport occurred overland. Lyrandar was forced to rely on its other abilities to pry gold from the warring nations.

And pry it did. The masters of weather were able to create a slow but steady stream of income by offering their services across the continent. Having difficulty moving your troops through a rainswept, mud-bogged region? Suffering food shortages thanks to a poor growing season combined with enemy raids? Want to render a trade route impassible? Lyrandar could do all of that. (And in fact, if the trade route under assault belonged to House Orien, the house might even offer a discount.)

On several occasions, Lyrandar was accused of violating its position of neutrality, but in fact it never did so. House members cleared up the weather for any army that could pay, but they refused to send poor weather against an enemy of their client. They fed crops, but refused to cause drought. They destroyed trade routes, but only those not clearly owned by any particular government.

As House Orien's ability to transport goods eroded, more and more nations and armies turned to sea travel for transport. Lyrandar built up a veritable fleet of elemental ships, circumventing the Korth Edicts that forbade it from developing a military force by simply pointing out that it had to supply the ships to its customers. Of course, since some customers merely wanted to hire Lyrandar to transport goods, as opposed to purchasing ships, the house did "coincidentally" wind up with a large number of vessels registered in its own name.

One of Lyrandar's biggest contributions to the Last War was Stormhome. The central home of House Lyrandar, an island in the midst of nigh-eternal storms, proved an excellent meeting place for spies and refugees throughout the war. Though the Aundairian crown technically held title to the island, it could do little more than mount a token patrol for enemy agents within the city. The other nations were reluctant to attack Stormhome for fear of alienating

Healers and Spies

The ability of the noncombatant Jorasco halflings to move across the countryside, and even through a raging battle, was highly appealing to the intelligence services of every nation. Throughout the war, almost every government offered Jorasco healers enormous sums of money to carry messages or state secrets, or to simply report on what they noticed during their journeys to and from the front lines.

Officially, House Jorasco rebuffed all such requests as violations of its oath of neutrality, its noncombatant status, and its duty as healers. On an individual level, however, several halflings secretly agreed to such arrangements, in exchange for a little extra money on the side. The house proper turned a blind eye to these activities, allowing its members to earn some gold by doing so—but also making it very clear, on the rare occasions when one of these "healer spies" was caught, that the house had no knowledge of his activities and would not shelter a guilty party.

Of far greater concern to House Jorasco was the sudden upsurge in forged dragonmarks. Though it's all but impossible to fake a dragonmark under close magical examination, a mark capable of passing cursory inspection is a much simpler affair. Some nations hired nonaffiliated halflings to make message runs, providing them with a mark that looked real enough to the average soldier on the field. House Jorasco threatened to reduce or even halt aid to governments faking these marks, and the practice faded from common usage, but it never halted entirely. Even to this day, techniques for forging the Mark of Healing are substantially more advanced than those directed at duplicating any of the other dragonmarks.

A member of House Lyrandar shows his enemies why it is a poor idea to threaten anyone who commands the weather itself

one of the great houses. On one of the rare occasions when someone did—such as Breland's aborted attempt to force the island to turn over a vital Karrnathi agent in the autumn of 943—Lyrandar showed that it had no qualms about using weather magic in its own defense. A single ship of the Brelish fleet survived to return home, and Stormhome remained safe from attack for the rest of the war.

THE FINAL DAYS

The focus of House Lyrandar changed dramatically when its artificers and magewrights—in conjunction with the gnomes of Zilargo and several members of House Cannith—developed the first airships. Suddenly, Lyrandar's mobility was no longer limited to the sea, or even to the overland routes still dominated by House Orien. Cargo, passengers, and soldiers could be flown anywhere, given sufficient time.

The early airships were clumsy and unreliable, compared to those of the modern day. The other houses and nations were initially reluctant to trust them, especially given initial and spectacular crashes, and the obscene prices House Lyrandar was demanding for their use. It quickly became apparent, however, that air travel was an advantage that nobody could afford to ignore. With the income earned from these first ships, Lyrandar commissioned larger, faster, safer, and far more numerous airships. Lyrandar still offered its services of weather control and sea travel, but at dramatically diminished capacity and importance to the house.

Although Lyrandar was willing to transport troops and materiel, it rebuffed all requests to hire airships for combat purposes because granting those requests would be a violation of its oath of neutrality. The house did not, however, refuse to sell the warring nations their own airships. The cost was so prohibitive that few nations bothered, and even those that did purchased only a few such ships, but some airships did see direct combat during the war. Even today, several veterans of the war cannot help but cringe when a ship flies overhead, expecting a barrage of arrows, boulders, *fireballs*, or even greater dangers.

LYRANDAR TODAY

Lyrandar suffered few losses during the war, compared to other houses such as Cannith or Orien. Its airships have become relatively common sights in the great cities of Khorvaire, so much so that they have overshadowed the house's other abilities and accomplishments in the eyes of the common folk. The house earns great profit by aiding the nations in recovering from the devastation of war, ensuring good weather for crops and other growth, preventing plague-causing heat, and so forth. It still sees quite a few ne'er-do-wells, spies, and fugitives coming through Stormhome, and even those who don't make use of the services offered by the Stormwalkers line the house's purse when they pay for basic goods and services offered on the island.

Many of the houses that benefited from the war have diminished in the public eye in recent years, as people who suffered have turned on those who took their "blood money." House Lyrandar, on the other hand, has actually risen in status, as the people credit its weather control with preventing famine, and its airships for reinvigorating the economy of the Five Nations. With the right

The Stormwalkers

One source of income for House Lyrandar during the war was Torval Enkiliost (CG male half-elf rogue 5) and his organization, the Stormwalkers. For a fee, this group would smuggle fugitives to and from Stormhome, out from under the eyes of whatever militia or organization they were fleeing. The Stormwalkers arranged meetings, ensured safe rendezvous, and otherwise facilitated the use of the island city as a neutral ground for all manner of illicit and semilegitimate wartime activities. Lyrandar made a token show of trying to stop the Stormwalkers from operating within other sovereign nations—but given that Enkiliost was actually a member of the house, providing funds and intelligence to Lyrandar leaders, it's no surprise those efforts never amounted to much. The Stormwalkers continue to operate (albeit at a reduced capacity) in the postwar era, aiding those who wish to arrange a meeting or temporary safe harbor in Stormhome—if the price is right.

political maneuvering, the half-elves of House Lyrandar might actually make themselves a true political as well as economic power on the continent.

Lyrandar is, however, less popular among the other houses. House Orien, reeling from the damage of the war and infuriated by Lyrandar's efforts at moving in on its territory, takes every opportunity to show up, or undercut, the House of Storms. House Cannith has seen how effectively Lyrandar has profited from airships that it helped to create, and it wants a larger piece of the action. Cannith was paid in full for its initial design work, and its artificers hold numerous contracts for maintaining and building new ones. For several of House Cannith's barons, that is not enough; they are giving serious thought to withdrawing their aid and demanding an equal share in the profits and disposition of the airships. To date, they have been argued down, for fear that Lyrandar will simply take the schematics it already has and find other artificers to build the ships, cutting Cannith off from a steady source of income. Relations between the two houses are precarious indeed; within the span of a year, they could be closer allies than ever, or they might be engaged in an economic war that has repercussions across the continent.

HOUSES PHIARLAN AND THURANNI

At the start of the Last War, there were twelve dragonmarked houses. By the end, there were thirteen. For the ordinary citizens of Khorvaire, many events convey a sense of the magnitude of the war: the fragmentation of Galifar into a dozen nations, the fall of White Arch Bridge, and the obliteration of Cyre. For members of the dragonmarked houses, the schism of House Phiarlan stands above the others as a sign of just how badly things went wrong during the war.

As the house that built its living on secrets, it would stand to reason that House Phiarlan would have the most foreknowledge of the brewing conflict, be the most prepared to deal with it, and have the best plan to profit from it. As it happened, none of those things was true: House Phiarlan was torn in half by the war, and neither portion of the sundered house came out the better for its involvement in the war.

IN THE BEGINNING

Before the Last War, House Phiarlan was essentially the intelligence organization of the kingdom of Galifar. Like the Sentinel Marshals of House Deneith, the covert agents of House Phiarlan worked to maintain order in the kingdom, uncover threats to the royal line, and guard against infiltration from beyond Khorvaire. The death of a ruler always caused a flurry of activity among Phiarlan's agents as they worked hard to prevent any dispute over the succession. The baroque laws of heritance, by which rulership of the Five Nations was supposed to be held by the five children of the king of Galifar rather than passed from parent to child, caused no end of trouble during transition periods, and House Phiarlan was often responsible for smoothing that trouble over.

Upon Jarot's death, the agents of House Phiarlan were more concerned about whether Kaius would relinquish control of Karrnath to his nephew than about whether he would properly cede the throne of Galifar to his sister. Somehow, Thalin, Kaius, and Wroann's plan to challenge the succession escaped the house's notice. By the time the three renegades declared their opposition to Mishann's claim, it was too late for House Phiarlan to employ its usual highly secretive methods to bring the situation under control. The house found itself thrown into a war for which it was not the least bit prepared.

Despite its inexplicable lack of foreknowledge, House Phiarlan did its best to capitalize on the new political landscape of Khorvaire. Even the nascent intelligence organizations of the Five Nations—the fledgling agencies that would grow into the Royal Eyes of Aundair, the King's Citadel of Breland, and their counterparts in other nations—were accustomed to purchasing intelligence from House Phiarlan, and the house was able to build on those relationships and position itself in the center of a web of espionage stretching across the continent.

In a situation similar to that of House Deneith, the elves of the House of Shadow were forced into a difficult position, straining their position of strict neutrality. It was one thing for Deneith mercenaries to refuse to fight each other on the battlefield; it was essentially impossible for Phiarlan spies to withhold information about Phiarlan spies working for their employers' enemies. Even more than the work of front-line soldiers, espionage demands partisanship. As the war progressed, factions within House Phiarlan found it increasingly difficult to maintain even a pretense of neutrality. Even if House Phiarlan had been a tightly unified house at the start of the war, it would have been hard-pressed to resist the internal forces that were tearing it apart from within. As it was, the house was already factionalized, and the tensions of the Last War stretched it past the breaking point.

THE FINAL DAYS

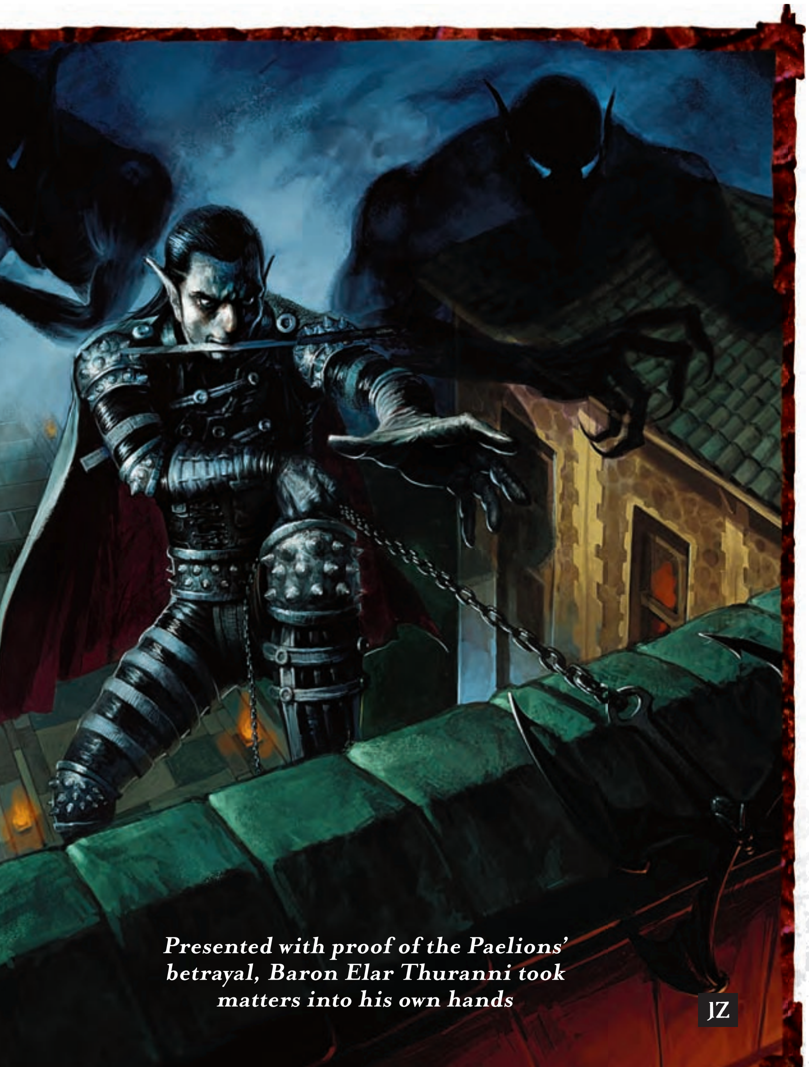
When the Mark of Shadow appeared among the elves of Aerenal, it did not appear in one single family line but in several. By the time of the Last War, five lines—Tialaen, Shol, Elorrenthi, Thuranni, and Paelion—were the most important families in House Phiarlan. As the war progressed, each of these lines cultivated favorite clients and developed unique strengths in different areas of espionage. Rivalry among the families was fierce, and when conflict between the clients of two lines coincided with a strong rivalry between those lines, the results were often violent.

They were never more violent than in 972. In that year, the Thuranni line of the house uncovered evidence that the Paelion line, famed for its fearsome assassins, was plotting an elaborate scheme to assassinate the heads of state of the Five Nations, strike against other dragonmarked houses, and seize power over all Khorvaire for itself. The plan was insanely grandiose, but when drawn up and executed by the most skilled infiltrators and assassins in the world, it might have worked. Upon receiving this information, Lord Elar Thuranni d'Phiarlan (LN male elf rogue 6/dragonmark heir 3) knew he had to act quickly.

Elar himself killed Lord Tolar Paelion d'Phiarlan, head of the Paelion line, and the Thuranni agents under his command killed every other Paelion they could find, both within the family holdings in the Lhazaar Principalities and in Phiarlan holdings across Khorvaire. The slaughter was brutally effective.

Lord Elar maintained (as he still does) that he acted in the best interests not only of House Phiarlan but of all the dragonmarked houses and even all Khorvaire. However, with evidence of the Paelion plot scant at best, Baron Elvinor Ellorenthi d'Phiarlan (LN female elf bard 7/shadowdancer 4) treated Lord Elar's actions as a blatant form of retribution for real or imagined wrongs suffered at the hand of the Paelions. She declared the entire Thuranni line excommunicated, banishing all the family members from House Phiarlan. Lord Elar refused to accept this punishment, however, and decreed the formation of a new house that carried the Mark of Shadow. In the chaos of the war, the Thuranni line's many clients continued doing business with the newly declared House Thuranni, and it gained legitimacy almost by default.

The validity of Baron Elar's claims about the Paelion plot is hard to determine. What seems clear is that some sort of conspiracy did exist, or more likely several intersecting plots and schemes. Some have suggested that the Order of the Emerald Claw (at the time, an extension of Karrnath's government and one of the Thuranni line's most important clients) planted the evidence against the Paelions. Others believe that Lord Elar and Baron Elvinor came to a mutual agreement to split the house and eliminate their rivals, the Paelions, along the way. Still others claim that the draconic Chamber was somehow involved, trying to manipulate events to fulfill prophetic claims that refer to thirteen dragonmarked houses. It is believed that the postwar Thronehold Tribunal heard several cases relating to the schism, but the proceedings and their conclusions are still shrouded in secrecy.



Presented with proof of the Paelions' betrayal, Baron Elar Thuranni took matters into his own hands

The effects of the Shadow Schism were profound and far-reaching. Not only were two houses created out of one, but every dragonmarked house was forced to reevaluate its place in this new world and its relationship to the new political realities of post-Galifar Khorvaire.

PHIARLAN AND THURANNI TODAY

At the end of the war, House Phiarlan suffered one final indignity: the destruction of its family enclave in Metrol, along with the rest of Cyre. In this case, at least, the house seems to have had intelligence that proved useful, since none of the leading members of the house were in the enclave on the Day of Mourning. Still, if House Phiarlan has any knowledge of the cause of the Mourning, it is not sharing—of course, sharing secrets is not what either House of Shadow does.

Both houses remain active in espionage, and many would argue that the Last War rages on in the constant subterfuge among the new nations of Khorvaire. In this continuing conflict, House Phiarlan works most often for clients west of the Mournland, particularly Aundair, Breland, and Thrane, and remains more adept at infiltration, surveillance, and economic manipulation. House Thuranni's most important clients are Karrnath, Droaam, Q'barra, and the Lhazaar Principalities, and its specialties include assassination and sabotage.

Neither house has forgotten the Paelions. To both houses, the lost line of Shadow stands as a reminder of the danger inherent in a lust for power. The difference is that House Phiarlan attributes that lust for power to the Thuranni line, while House Thuranni blames the Paelions for grasping at power. Remembering the Paelions, House Thuranni has noticed and carefully watches the faction within House Deneith that apparently shares the goal of the Paelions: uniting Galifar under dragonmarked rule, specifically that of House Deneith. Should that faction ever rise to power within House Deneith, House Thuranni would almost certainly take steps to neutralize it, as it did with the Paelions. For its part, House Phiarlan remembers the Paelion line as martyrs, noble victims of the treacherous Thuranni line. These attitudes keep animosity between the two lines stronger than that between any other two dragonmarked houses.

HOUSE THARASHK

One might expect a house made up of hunters, descended from the orcs of the west and the humans tough enough to intermingle with them, to be right at home in the ongoing conflict of the Last War. The truth is that, at least initially, House Tharashk was unable to profit much from the war, or to turn the ongoing struggle to its advantage. By the war's end, however, the House of Finding had reversed its fortunes considerably, not merely adding gold to the house's coffers and respect to its name, but changing the very face of Khorvaire's more civilized cultures.

IN THE BEGINNING

At the war's onset, nobody expected the conflict to greatly impact House Tharashk, or vice versa. As one of the youngest houses, based in a region far from the heart of the conflict, it seemed likely that Tharashk would continue on as it always had, affected by the Last War only to the extent that all citizens of Khorvaire could expect a degree of economic hardship.

Those who made such assumptions did not realize the burning desire of Tharashk's members to increase their house's prestige. Warriors all, they refused to let a continentwide war rage about them without making every attempt to turn it to their advantage.

At first, they had precious little success at doing so. Several of the house's members made excellent soldiers, hiring on as mercenaries, while more of them worked as trackers and scouts for any army that would pay for their services. These assignments were all on an individual basis, however, and earned few coins for the house as a whole. Most of the warring nations turned to a more established sources of soldiers: House Deneith.

Tharashk earned a far greater amount of income by offering its services as bounty hunters rather than soldiers. Many nations that would otherwise have had little to do with the house hired the hunters to track down war criminals and deserters when their own military forces lacked the numbers or the ability to do so. The nations also tried to hire Tharashk hunters to locate enemy artificers, planners, and officers for assassination. Despite its desire for respect and income, the house as a whole refused to undertake such missions. Unofficially, several of its members did accept such commissions on their own.

Most of the house's contribution to the early war was in the mining and delivery of dragonshards. In conjunction with House Lyrandar, which transported the valuable crystals from the backwater Shadow Marches to the other nations, Tharashk made an enormous profit from the dragonshard-heavy fields of the region. Many of its warriors were occupied in guarding those fields, or escorting shipments to and from Lyrandar galleons. Every nation in the war purchased Tharashk-mined shards at some point, as did Cannith and several other dragonmarked houses.

House Tharashk's forces fought several pitched battles in the early war against enemies who sought to raid the dragonshard fields for their own use. A Brelish flotilla arrived on the shores of the Shadow Marches in 899, an Aundairian expedition struck from the Eldeen Reaches in 913, and several of the unaligned orc tribes attempted to form their own dragonshard-trading consortium in 944. In all three cases, Tharashk succeeded in repelling the incursions, and the heightened prices it levied against Breland and Aundair for years afterward were sufficient to convince other nations not to try again.

THE FINAL DAYS

Tharashk's contributions to the war might have remained at these levels—constant but barely notable—had it not been for a farsighted pair of siblings. Jhentreik (N male half-orc druid 5) and Jhourka (N female half-orc ranger 5) Hirrecht d'Tharashk encountered the dusk hag Sora Teraza during her wanderings, in the years before the rise of the Daughters of Sora Kell in Droaam. Constantly seeking eldritch knowledge, Sora Teraza petitioned to study the dragonshard fields, and the siblings not only allowed her to do so but made her feel welcome. While escorting the hag back south afterward, Jhentreik and Jhourka were attacked by a band of trolls near the border. Recovering from this encounter, the pair realized just how dangerous the inhabitants of that nation were—but also how valuable they could be on the fields of war. When the Daughters of Sora Kell united Droaam years later, the siblings approached Sora Teraza about the issue of mercenary monsters.

The results were greater than either side could have hoped. Through House Tharashk, the Daughters gained an insider's view of the cultures surrounding them, as well as a channel of communication with nations that would not normally be willing to listen to a "bunch of monsters." Tharashk, in turn, suddenly had access to a veritable horde of potential mercenary soldiers, mighty and terrifying creatures that House Deneith could not provide. Through intense negotiation and the splitting of profits, the house and the Daughters came to an arrangement in which the hags sent large bands of their subjects to serve as mercenaries in the waning days of the Last War, all arranged, managed, and led by Tharashk members.

Tharashk's Droaamish mercenaries first took the field in 987, at the Battle of Silver Lake. Hired by more militant members of Queen Aurala's court as an experiment, a unit of ogres and trolls, led by Tharashk half-orcs, raged across the shores of the lake and routed a unit of Eldeen wardens. Word of the event spread quickly, causing every ruler, general, house baron, and mercenary captain to sit up and take notice. In a matter of weeks, Tharashk went from being one of the most uninvolved houses to being everyone's new best friend.

Or, rather, almost everyone's: House Deneith was greatly disturbed by the sudden competition. Calling on its political alliances, and playing on the innate distrust of the monstrous races, it was able to keep its own mercenaries at the forefront of the various nations' attention. Still, House Tharashk managed to steal a sizable portion of mercenary profits away from Deneith. By the end of the war, giant and monstrous mercenaries were, although not a common sight, no longer especially surprising either.

HUNT FOR THE HARPY

Among the many deals made between Tharashk and the Daughters of Sora Kell, one in particular occupies the hunters to this day. As the hags solidified their hold over Droaam, a select few potential rivals escaped their purge. One of the most dangerous is the harpy Sklar, also called the Hag on High (page 81). Rather than devote their own energies to tracking down this fugitive, the Daughters have instead passed that responsibility on to House Tharashk. A hunting party, currently led by Lithra Ruusk (CN female half-orc scout^{CAd} 9), has dwelt in the wilds of Droaam for over a decade. It is responsible for one thing, and one thing only—locating Sklar and a few other fugitives for the Daughters of Sora Kell.

THARASHK TODAY

Today, Tharashk is known equally well for its ability to find almost anyone or anything and its capacity to provide bestial mercenaries of a sort not obtainable through House Deneith. Although the competition has not erupted into overt hostilities, Deneith and Tharashk are on a collision course as they compete for the market in mercenaries. To date, Deneith still has the advantage: That house has more contacts, a more established reputation, a larger number of available soldiers, and the ability to provide soldiers that don't necessarily stand out on a battlefield or in a civilian population. Perhaps most important, House Deneith has an official exemption to the Korth Accords, allowing it to maintain a standing military force—a benefit that Tharashk lacks. Tharashk, however, can undercut Deneith's costs, since it has additional sources of income (such as the dragonshard fields) unavailable to its rival. Further, it can provide mercenary forces of a type Deneith still can't match. House Deneith has made numerous overtures to the Daughters of Sora Kell, but has so far failed to obtain access to the Droaamish soldiers. It has had more luck with its accusations that Tharashk has violated the Korth Accords, and the younger house has had to scramble numerous times to make it clear that it does not employ the monsters of Droaam, but only facilitates their contracts with other nations.

One of Tharashk's greatest defenders against the maneuvers of House Deneith is House Lyrandar. The two houses still work together to transport dragonshards and share in the profits, and Lyrandar doesn't want to see its business partner taken down.

House Tharashk's greatest impact on Khorvairian culture, however, has been entirely coincidental. As the half-orcs of the house appear more frequently among the gatherings of the rich and powerful, and as their Droaamish mercenaries occupy more battlefields and stand more posts, the traditional races have become to grow accustomed to their presence. Though it cannot yet be said that the humans, elves, and halflings of Khorvaire are fully accepting of the monstrous races, they are no longer as hostile or prejudiced as they were only a few decades back. Particularly within more cosmopolitan communities, some of the monstrous humanoids might be only a generation or two away from true acceptance.

THE MANIFEST LEGION

Even in a world as magic-rich as Eberron, the central focus of war remains on the mundane. Soldiers in armor, clashing sword against shield, stand at the core of any battlefield. The weapons might be enchanted, the mounts magebred, the armies guided by divinations and supported by *fireballs*, but the archers of Breland and the knights of Thrane are still individuals of natural ability.

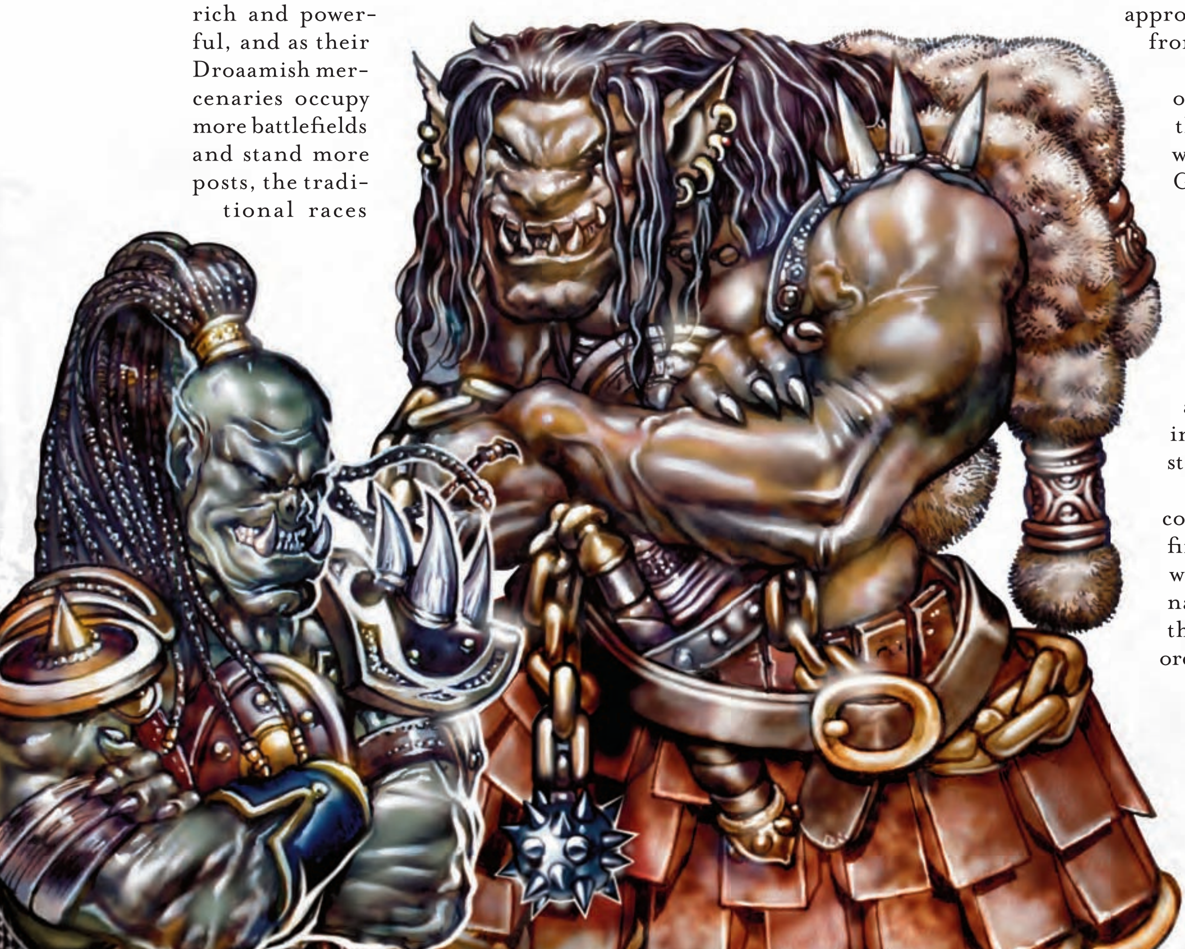
Not so the mercenary order known as the Manifest Legion. Dating back to the days before the Last War, the Legion truly came into its own during that conflict, and it remains, to this day, the largest independent arcane military force in the Five Nations.

IN THE BEGINNING

The Manifest Legion was the brainchild of the Aundairian wizard Gwinnath Turrien. In 888, Turrien was the favored apprentice of Uri Charvel, liaison between the Arcane Congress and the royals of Aundair. (This is a position held in the modern day by Minister Adal; see *ECS* 138.) While Charvel was heavily focused in the research of magic, his apprentice was far more interested in its application. When the Arcane Congress learned that Turrien and a few colleagues had provided services to Aundair's military without approval, they were expelled from the organization.

This dishonor turned out to be the start of something far larger. Along with her fellow "rejects," Gwinnath Turrien formed a new cabal of wizards. Its initial purpose was to provide arcane services of all types, but the requests and contracts it received were largely for military applications—a trend that increased further with the start of the Last War.

In 896, Turrien and her cohorts engaged in their first true battle. The wizard was horrified at the carnage, and she vowed that the services she and her order provided in the future



The bestial warriors of House Tharashk provided the factions of the Last War with access to mercenaries even more bestial would reduce bloodshed as much as possible. This was the start of the group's focus on the conjuration magic that eventually inspired its name: the Manifest Legion.

THE FINAL DAYS

For roughly the first half of the Last War, the Manifest Legion remained an obscure mercenary unit, hired occasionally by Aundairian or Brelish interests, but only moderately successful. It was Turrien's successor, a Brelish wizard called Long Uthar (LN male gnome conjurer 6), who managed to bring the Legion to international attention. In 950, Brelish troops moved to drive Thrane invaders from Starilaskur. At the start of the first great battle, a veritable horde of elementals and fiendish creatures slammed into the Thrane flank, weakening the line and distracting it from the Brelish assault. This unexpected participation in a major battle captured the attention not only of Breland and Thrane, but of the other nations as well. Although the Manifest Legion still lacked the reputation of other mercenary orders, such as the Red Gauntlet Regiment (*Player's Guide to Eberron* 94), every military leader swiftly realized the potential in summoned creatures that could be placed at will and ordered to take any action without question. From 950 through the end of the war, every nation employed the services of the Legion at one time or another, though Thrane—still angry over the organization's "demonstration" and uncomfortable with its use of fiendish minions—did so less than the others.

THE MANIFEST LEGION TODAY

Many mercenary companies witnessed a drop in contracts after the Last War, but the Manifest Legion remains as busy today as ever. Because summoned creatures cannot be captured, interrogated, or traced to a particular government, the Legion is a favored tool of those nations that wish to harass a neighbor or rival without reprisals or political repercussions. Now an old gnome, Long Uthar is growing somewhat more conservative in his views, refusing to take on jobs above a certain level of violence. He worries about igniting a larger conflict, or turning an entire government against the Manifest Legion. He has yet to throw his support behind a particular successor, since none of the other powerful wizards of the Legion share his viewpoint. When Uthar dies—all but a certainty within the next decade—the Legion could become much more successful and much more dangerous, only to find itself wiped out by a nation it pushed too far.

MILITARY STRUCTURE

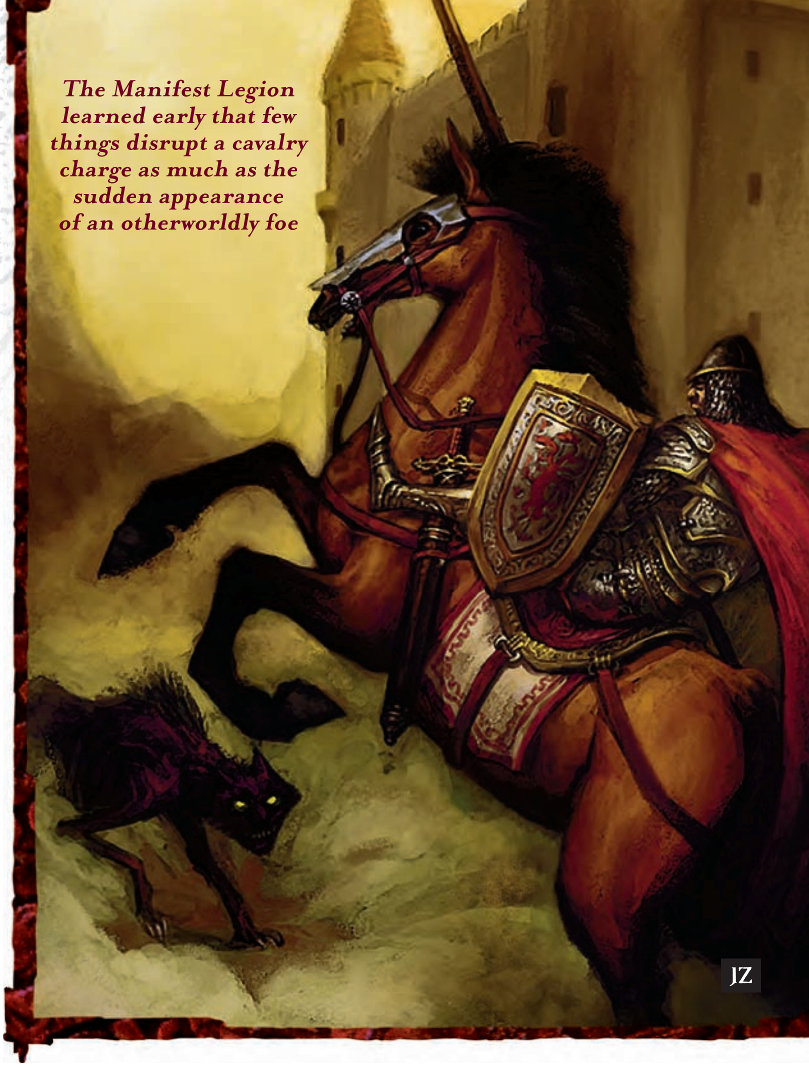
The Manifest Legion is a literal army, albeit a minor one. It tends to operate in small units, though it has on occasion fielded entire regiments of conjurers.

Earthbound Units

A battlefield cabal is formed by combining two to four cabals and is led by an arcane-major, normally a 4th-level conjurer.

Two to four battlefield cabals combine to form a high cabal. The commanding high arcanist is normally a 5th-level conjurer.

A grand cabal, formed only rarely, consists of two high cabals. A 6th-level conjurer with the rank of arch-marshal commands.



The Manifest Legion learned early that few things disrupt a cavalry charge as much as the sudden appearance of an otherworldly foe

EL 7: A cabal consists of three summoners—one of whom leads as senior arcanist—and their bodyguards.

Senior Arcanist: human conjurer 3.
Summoners (2): human conjurer 2.
Bodyguards (6): human warrior 1.

Aerial Units

Making full use of its magic, the Legion sometimes fields air units. These are usually individual cabals; in larger groups, they are considered parts of earthbound units.

EL 9: An aerial cabal consists solely of casters, all with *fly* spells cast upon them or possessing magic items enabling flight.

High Arcanist: human conjurer 5.
Arcane-Majors (2): human conjurer 4.
Senior Arcanists (3): human conjurer 3.
Summoners (5): human conjurer 2.

General Tactics

The Manifest Legion has built its entire reputation around the use of summoned monsters as troops and assassins. Members prefer to position themselves with a commanding view of the battlefield, without leaving themselves open to easy counterattack.

When possible, the Legionnaires split up, communicating with one another through *message* or similar magic, or at worst through runners. They remain close enough to each other to facilitate such communication, but far enough apart that a magical counterattack (such as a *fireball* or a summoned monster) is unable to eliminate the entire cabal. When they operate in larger groups, one or two conjurers often hold back to counterspell any incoming arcane attacks.

Only once they are properly positioned do the Legionnaires launch their attacks. From their dominating position, they can place summoned creatures and other magical effects almost anywhere on the battlefield.

Because of the relatively short duration of *summon monster* and similar spells, the Manifest Legion makes substantial use of Extend Spell, Sudden Extend^{CAr}, and *metamagic rods of Extend Spell*. In addition, many members make use of the Rapid Summoning^{CM} feat, which reduces the casting time of *summon monster* spells to a standard action.

Mercenaries of Darguun

There was never supposed to be an "army of Darguun." House Deneith thought it was acquiring goblinoid mercenaries from random primitive tribes. It was only when Haruuc gained control over the Ghaal'dar hobgoblins that they became a unified force. This event effectively divided the forces of Darguun into two eras. Both are described below—the mercenary bands, and the far larger and more organized Ghaal'dar military.

To understand goblinoid military forces, one must acknowledge that Darguun is actually multiple nations in one. The Ghaal'dar clans are the most numerous. These families provide the majority of the goblinoids who served as mercenaries during the Last War, and who rallied around Lhesh Haruuc. Of almost equal influence within the nation's borders, however, are the Heirs of Dhakaan. Although less numerous than the Ghaal'dar, the Dhakaani are even more militant and more disciplined. They seek to rebuild a true goblinoid empire, and they never hire themselves out to nongoblinoid nations. The Heirs of Dhakaan remained deep in the jungles and caves of Darguun throughout the Last War, watching and waiting, and have emerged only since that conflict ended. Because they did not participate in the war, they are not detailed here to any degree, but their importance cannot be ignored. Should they manage to unite as the Ghaal'dar have, or should they obtain power over the Ghaal'dar after Haruuc dies, Darguun could become a far more expansionist and dangerous military power.

EARLY WAR MILITARY STRUCTURE (MERCENARIES)

Early in the war, the goblinoids of Darguun had no overarching military structure. Even their largest units were fairly small and often interspersed with other, nongoblinoid forces belonging to whichever nation they served. This structure remains in place for those clans that have not been incorporated into the Lhesh's military forces.

Infantry

A standard infantry platoon consists of two light squads and one heavy squad. The leader, called the *lhurusk*, is usually a 3rd-level hobgoblin warrior.

A company consists of two platoons. The supreme commander is a *lhevk*, a 4th- to 6th-level hobgoblin warrior or a 4th- or 5th-level hobgoblin fighter.

EL 4: A light squad is made up of goblins led by a hobgoblin.

Lhikor: hobgoblin warrior 1, *MM* 153.
Olhirots (4): goblin warrior 1, *MM* 133.

EL 7: A heavy squad includes bugbears and a greater quantity of goblins, but is still led by a hobgoblin.

Lhikor: hobgoblin warrior 1, *MM* 153.
Thradaasks (3): bugbear, *MM* 29.
Olhirots (8): goblin warrior 1, *MM* 133.

EL 8: Hobgoblins with good training are the sole members of elite squads.

Lhurusks (3): hobgoblin warrior 3, *MM* 153.
Lhikor-Rhus (8): hobgoblin warrior 2, *MM* 133.

What Good Do Two Rounds Do?

Thanks to various means of extending spells, a Legion conjurer could get from 2 to 12 rounds of use out of a summoned monster. How can Turrien and Uthar have built a mercenary army around summoned creatures that vanish in less than a minute? What good do they do?

In a word: Plenty.

- The sudden appearance of a line of summoned creatures can break a cavalry or infantry charge. Manifest Legion conjurers who have the Rapid Summoning^{CM} feat frequently ready actions to hurl summoned creatures directly into the path of oncoming soldiers. At the very least, this tactic forces the soldiers to stop and deal with the threat, or suffer attacks of opportunity from creatures that will then be in a position to attack them from behind.
- Although *summon monster* spells don't have great range, they can still be cast so that the creatures appear behind an enemy's front ranks. The Legion can target a row of archers, focus attacks on officers, or disrupt enemy spellcasters, all without having to fight through the intervening lines of defending foot soldiers.
- During an offensive maneuver, the presence of a number of summoned creatures can greatly increase the effectiveness of the mundane troops. The monsters absorb many of the enemy's counterattacks, ensuring that more of the soldiers survive to continue fighting.
- Summoned monsters are perfectly suited for covering a swift retreat or rescuing a unit surrounded by enemy soldiers. They can be placed as needed, and they require nothing in the way of reinforcement or rescue.
- It's vital to remember that most of Khorvaire's armies are made up principally of low-level warriors and commoners. Although a fiendish animal might not pose much threat to an adventuring party, or even a team of experienced combatants, such a creature could certainly kill one or two average soldiers. With a series of *summon monster* spells, a cabal of the Manifest Legion can take out a military unit several times its size, if the majority of that unit's soldiers are unexceptional.

Few forces on the battlefields of the Last War were as feared as the Darguun hobgoblins

Cavalry

Darguuls who serve as cavalry did not always do so on horseback. Many preferred the fearsome predatory cats of the Darguun wilds.

A heavy cavalry squad consists of two light squads. It is led by a *lhurusk*, a 3rd-level hobgoblin warrior, mounted on a tiger. Darguun mercenaries almost never operate in cavalry units larger than the heavy squad.

EL 7 or 8: A light cavalry squad is led by a hobgoblin on a larger mount.

Lhikor: hobgoblin warrior 1, *MM* 153.
Light Warhorse: MM 274 or
Tiger: MM 281.
Olhirots (4): goblin warrior 1, *MM* 133.
Leopards (4): MM 274.

EL 10: An elite cavalry squad consists of well-trained hobgoblins and their tiger mounts.

Lhevk: hobgoblin fighter 4, *MM* 153.
Tiger (9 HD): MM 281.
Lhikors (6): hobgoblin warrior 1, *MM* 153.
Tigers (6): MM 281.

Common Tactics

When used as mercenaries, goblins rarely march in large numbers, preferring instead to take advantage of pack tactics. Roaming teams pick off scouts and stragglers, and if they engage a cohesive enemy force, they come at it from multiple directions, requiring foes to split their attention. Goblinoid cavalry harries the flanks of a marching column, or attacks supply lines and messengers, where mounts and pack animals are likely untrained for war, and might well panic at the scent of approaching predators.

ELITE UNITS

Few goblinoid mercenary units obtained any degree of fame (at least outside goblinoid circles). This isn't due to a lack of accomplishment, but simply because—to the average human, elf, or halfling—one hobgoblin is pretty much like another. Still, a few units did distinguish themselves so well that their names have spread beyond the borders of Darguun.

Avrahk Sehn (The Fog Riders)

A mounted unit hired by Breland, the Avrahk Sen were frequently based out of Argonth (see page 45), serving as scouts and outriders for that massive but slow-moving fortress. The Fog Riders provided advance warning of incoming attack, located potential targets, and escorted Brelish officers and forces to and from Argonth itself. They cemented their fame, at least within Breland's borders, when they rode forth to rescue General Allusair Connol (LG male human marshal^{MH} 6), one of the nation's greatest military minds and a close personal friend of King Boranex. Some say it was gratitude to the Avrahk Sen, as much as the current military and political situation, that inspired Breland to ultimately recognize Darguun after the hobgoblin revolt.

EL 11: This elite unit featured varied goblinoids with class levels and their mounts. Subakir rides the strongest tiger, Klist the next strongest, and Azalust the third. The others ride leopards.

Lhevk Subakir: LN male hobgoblin fighter 7, *MM* 153.
Tiger (10 HD): MM 281.
Klist: LE male hobgoblin cleric 5 (Mockery), *MM* 153.
Tiger (9 HD): MM 281.
Azalust: LE male bugbear scout^{CAd} 5, *MM* 29.
Tiger (1): MM 281.
Duruusk: LN female goblin sorcerer 5, *MM* 133.
Ohldru: N female goblin fighter 5, *MM* 133.
Leopards (2): MM 274.

Cyre's Scourge

This unit's Goblin name has been lost to history with the destruction of Cyre, but its existence is still well remembered. A unit of goblin heavy infantry, it operated primarily along the Cyre–Karrnath border. Many Cyran officers grew to know War-Leader Ulvoth and her troops, and she was greatly respected if not well liked.

All this changed on the day of Haruuc's rebellion, when Ulvoth rose along with her troops and slaughtered an entire garrison of Cyre's best soldiers—most of them in their sleep. Cyre's citizens blamed Ulvoth's unit, now nicknamed "the Scourge," not only for the deaths of those soldiers but also for the several thousand soldiers slain in the next conflict with Karrnath—a battle that suffered greatly due to the lack of both the goblin mercenaries and the soldiers they killed. To this day, Cyre's Scourge is considered the paragon of goblinoid loyalty in Darguun, but spoken of with hatred by Cyre's survivors.

EL 8: Varied goblinoids with class levels serve in this elite unit.

Lhurusk Ulvoth: LE female hobgoblin fighter 4, *MM* 153.
Kroskul: CN male bugbear barbarian 3, *MM* 29.
Imist: LN male goblin cleric 3 (the Shadow), *MM* 133.
Lhikor Hobgoblins (3): LN and LE male and female hobgoblin fighter 2, *MM* 153.
Olhirot Goblin Foot Soldiers (8): LN and LE male and female goblin warrior 1, *MM* 133.

LATE WAR MILITARY STRUCTURE (GHAAL'DAR MILITARY UNITS)

After the hobgoblin rebellion against the forces of Breland and Cyre, Lhesh Haruuc swiftly organized his clans into larger and more structured military units. Previous ranks and terminology were kept for ease of use, but their meanings became more narrowly defined.

GHAAL'DAR MILITARY RANKS

Title	Rank Equivalent	Rough Common Translation
Olhirot	Private	Spear-Bearer or Spear-Catcher)
Thradaask	Private	Shock Trooper
Lhikor	Corporal	Warblade
Lhurusk	Sergeant	War-Leader
Lhevk	Lieutenant	Warlord
Lhevk-Rhu	Captain	Skilled Warlord
Lhevket	Colonel	Elder Warlord
Lhesh	General	High Warlord (only Haruuc can claim this title)

The *rhu* suffix is also applied to titles of lower rank than *lhevk*. In such cases, it indicates someone with more experience and prestige than others of his rank, but who has not yet attained the next higher rank.

Infantry

Once united, larger goblinoid units benefited from increased formal training and a rise in the average level of their officers.

A platoon consists of two squads plus one heavy squad. Most platoons are commanded by a *lhurusk*, a 2nd-level hobgoblin fighter.

A company is formed of two platoons. A *lhevk*, normally a 3rd- or 4th-level hobgoblin fighter, leads.

Three companies form a battalion, led by a 5th- or 6th-level hobgoblin fighter known as a *lhevk-rhu*.

The regiment is the largest unit commonly fielded by the Ghaal'dar. It consists of either two or three battalions. A *lhevket,* normally a hobgoblin fighter of 7th or 8th level, commands.

Although fielded only rarely, a larger force, called the horde, sometimes took the fields of the Last War. A horde consists of two to four regiments, led personally by Lhesh Haruuc.

EL 7: A standard squad after unification is similar to its earlier heavy counterpart.

Lhikor: hobgoblin warrior 1, *MM* 153.
Thradaasks (3): bugbear, *MM* 29.
Olhirots (8): goblin warrior 1, *MM* 133.

EL 9: These heavy units are notably better trained—and thus more dangerous.

Lhurusk: hobgoblin fighter 2, *MM* 153.
Thradaask-Rhus (3): bugbear rogue 1 or warrior 2, *MM* 29.
Olhirot-Rhus (8): goblin rogue 1 or warrior 2, *MM* 133.

EL 7: The favoritism toward elite hobgoblin units did not change with the unification of the Ghaal'dar.

Lhurusk: hobgoblin fighter 2, *MM* 153.
Lhikor-Rhus (6): hobgoblin fighter 1, *MM* 153.

Cavalry

The unified forces of the Ghaal'dar combined their cavalry into larger units than they had earlier in the war, though still nothing to compare to the massed horse of Karrnath or Thrane.

The largest cavalry unit is the platoon. It consists of three squads and one elite squad. The commander is a 5th- or 6th-level hobgoblin fighter entitled *lhevk-rhu,* riding a 12 HD tiger.

EL 9: Cavalry squads are larger than they were before unification.

Lhikor (1): hobgoblin warrior 1, *MM* 153.
Tiger: MM 281.
Olhirots (8): goblin warrior 1, *MM* 133.
Leopards (8): MM 274.

EL 11: Elite cavalry squads were also increased in size.

Lhevk: hobgoblin fighter 4, *MM* 153.
Tiger (9 HD): MM 281.
Lhikors (8): hobgoblin warrior 1, *MM* 153.
Tigers (8): MM 281.

Common Tactics

Once their troops are assembled in larger units, Ghaal'dar tactics are far more representative of great armies. They frequently march en masse, rank after rank of disciplined soldiers prepared to meet any enemy on equal footing. Bugbears often make up the front ranks, where their physical prowess can shatter enemy resistance (and where they can absorb incoming attacks that might otherwise hit hobgoblins). Goblins serve primarily as scouts and archers, while the hobgoblins make up the ranks of officers and members of elite units. A marching Ghaal'dar army can roll over many equally large human forces, by combining a high level of discipline and organization with the enhanced physicality of the hobgoblins and bugbears.

That said, the armies of Ghaal'dar continue to make use of mobile tactics, which they mastered while working as mercenaries. They particularly like to combine the two, marching the bulk of a force down the center while using outriders and special operations teams to flank the enemy.

ELITE UNITS

The citizens of the "civilized" nations have far more important things to consider than who a given Darguun leader might be, or where his unit is stationed. To date, only a tiny handful of Ghaal'dar's elite units have earned recognition beyond the borders of Darguun; one of these is presented here.

Ulvregt Bathach (The Great Hunter)

In terms of its actual membership, little differentiates Ulvregt Bathach from dozens of other elite Ghaal'dar military units that patrol the border with the Mournland. This unit is well known because, rather than riding individual mounts, the entire squad fights from a howdah mounted atop a dire tiger the size of an elephant.

EL 14: This unit features hobgoblins with class levels and one astoundingly massive dire tiger.

Lhevk Astandi: LN female hobgoblin fighter 4/ranger 3, *MM* 153.

Thadar: LN male hobgoblin cleric 6 (Dol Dorn), *MM* 153.

Sorghis: LN female hobgoblin warmage$^{\text{CAr}}$ 6, *MM* 153.

Lhikor Hobgoblins (3): LN and LE male and female hobgoblin fighter 2, *MM* 153.

Zir (34 HD): dire tiger, *MM* 65.

MERCENARIES OF DROAAM

The monstrous inhabitants of Droaam never had a true stake in the Last War—which, of course, didn't prevent them from fighting in it. The untamed western wilds of Breland were home to all manner of foul beasts, from tribes of gnolls and orcs to harpies, trolls, and other beasts of nightmare. From the earliest days of the war, they took advantage of Breland's distraction to launch raids on border communities and travelers, sometimes striking deep into Breland proper. None of these attacks were organized, however; each simply represented a clan or warband taking what it could. Enemy nations, particularly Karrnath, sent operatives into the region to stir up trouble, attacking the monsters and framing Breland, or hiring individual clans as mercenaries.

This sporadic involvement in the war continued up until 986, when the Daughters of Sora Kell began their conquest. After that point, the Droaamites were organized into fighting groups and began more widespread mercenary activities, employing the services of House Tharashk. They saw their most extensive use in the Eldeen Reaches, in the pay of Aundair. The physical makeup of the groups changed, mixing races to great effect, as did their tactics. By the time of the signing of the Treaty of Thronehold, Droaam's monstrous units were among some of the most feared on the field of battle. They continue to be so today.

MILITARY STRUCTURE

Droaam's forces are not divided into standing armies per se. Rather, they consist of individual mercenary units, each with a specific function. These squads are assigned to larger units in whatever army hires them, as that commander sees fit. The units described here represent Droaamish forces since the rise of the Daughters of Sora Kell. Before this point, most of them were single-race groups—all ogres, all harpies, and so forth—or at most consisted of closely related groups such as goblinoids.

Infantry

EL 7: This assassination squad is rarely seen on the actual battlefield. It is usually assigned to eliminate enemy officers or perform missions of sabotage and terror.

Leader: goblin wererat rogue 1, *MM* 133 and 171.

Assassins (4): goblin wererat warrior 1, *MM* 133 and 171.

Fear, almost as much as flight, was one of the greatest weapons in Droaam's arsenal

EL 9: Called a "line-breaker," this squad is designed to apply brute force to enemy strongpoints. The harpy leads the group from her vantage point above the battlefield.

Harpy: *MM* 150.

Minotaurs (2): *MM* 188.

Bugbear Ragers (6): bugbear barbarian 1, *MM* 29 or

Gnoll Trackers (6): gnoll ranger 2, *MM* 130.

EL 7: Shock squads, consisting of orcs and gnolls led by a gnoll ranger, serve a simple purpose—eliminate enemy soldiers on the battlefield.

Gnoll Tracker: gnoll ranger 2, *MM* 130.

Gnolls (4): *MM* 130.

Orcs (6): orc warrior 1, *MM* 203.

EL 10: The Droaamish siege squad is rare indeed, and thank all the gods for that. Consisting of various giants led by a powerful ogre mage, it served primarily to destroy enemy keeps and emplacements.

Ogre Mage: *MM* 200.

Hill Giant: *MM* 123 or

Trolls (2): *MM* 247.

Ogres (6): *MM* 199.

Cavalry

Droaamish cavalry is made up almost entirely of goblinoids. A pack consists of two cavalry squads. It is normally led by a 4th-level hobgoblin fighter on a 12 HD worg. Cavalry troops rarely form into groups larger than packs.

EL 7: Cavalry squads consist of goblinoids mounted on wolves.

Pack Leader: hobgoblin fighter 1, *MM* 153.

Dire Wolf: MM 65.
Riders (5): goblin warrior 1, *MM* 133.
Wolves (5): MM 283.

Special Purpose

Droaam fields several unusual units, designed to take advantage of their monstrous nature. A flight consists of two aerial assault squads led by a harpy archer (7th-level fighter).

EL 9: Aerial assault squads, led by a harpy, harass enemy troops and supply lines from the air.

Harpy: MM 151.
Gargoyles (4): MM 113.

EL 12: A "stone band" is one of the deadliest of Droaam's forces. It consists of four medusas, mounted in pairs atop two trained gorgons. The gorgons are fitted with large helms that prevent them from moving their heads up beyond a certain point, so they can neither see the medusas nor expose them to their petrifying breath.

Medusas (4): MM 180.
Gorgons (2): MM 137.

Common Tactics

The Droaamites don't have specific tactics on which they draw. Each unit knows what it's supposed to do—devastate an advancing army's front lines, infiltrate to assassinate an officer, take down a wall—and they proceed to do it. If a commander is lucky, his Droaamish mercenaries at least follow orders and work with other soldiers in the process, but even this isn't always the case.

Despite this apparent lack of discipline, Droaamish units are extremely good at what they do, perhaps because the hags have divided them into groups that focus on their natural strengths and inclinations.

ELITE UNITS

Where most civilized folk are concerned, monsters are monsters. Little differentiates one group of rampaging giants or goblinoids from another one. Still, some of Droaam's mercenary teams performed so well (or at least so dramatically) during the war that their names linger on in the historical record.

The Beast Brigade

Nicknamed by those unfortunate enough to encounter them, this team of monsters consists entirely of lycanthropes—and skilled lycanthropes, at that. It was responsible for the deaths of a hundred Reachers at the Battle of Xandrar, and it wiped out a company of Silver Flame soldiers at one point while in the employ of Cyre. For obvious reasons, the Beast Brigade and the soldiers of Thrane have a particular hatred for one another. Although Flamekeep is not currently prepared to risk its soldiers in deep penetration missions to hunt down this band, it has offered a standing reward to anyone willing to eliminate the Brigade and return with proof of the deed.

EL 13: The Brigade features varied monstrous lycanthropes, most with adventuring class levels. These creatures all have the lycanthrope template (*MM* 175), but several of them take on the forms of unusual animals when they transform. The ability score adjustments for nonstandard lycanthropes in hybrid or animal form are shown in parentheses below.

Tkintimarasta: CE female gnoll dire werehyena fighter 6 (gnoll *MM* 130; use dire wolf *MM* 65; Str +16, Dex +4, Con +6).

Khapa: CN male bugbear wereboar barbarian 4 (bugbear *MM* 29; wereboar *MM* 171).

Lhugol: CE male troll dire werewolverine (troll *MM* 247; dire wolverine *MM* 66; Str +12, Dex +6, Con +8).

MONSTROUS POLITICS

Most citizens of the Five Nations believe the hags organized their mercenary forces in order to make as great an impact on the Last War as possible, so that they might petition to become their own recognized nation afterward. Indeed, the Daughters' request to be included in the Thronehold talks—a request that was refused—seems to confirm this notion.

It never occurs to most people to wonder why the hags would care if the other nations recognized Droaam. Furthermore, the dusk hag Sora Teraza is an oracle; surely she would have known, even before the petition for inclusion, what the results would be.

And in fact, she did. The Daughters of Sora Kell knew from the start that their petition would fail. Making the request anyway was nothing short of brilliant psychological manipulation on the part of the coven of hags. To their subjects, they can now point to their rejection as incontrovertible proof that the humans, elves, and other "civilized" races will never accept "monsters" as equals. None of Droaam's native factions could possibly challenge the Daughters for dominance without outside help. With one political maneuver, the hags have ensured that any potentially rebellious subjects would be unwilling to turn to foreigners for aid, and that even if they did, no other Droaamites would support them.

To everyone else in Khorvaire, Droaam can now be dismissed as a wilderness full of monsters: a good source of hired thugs, but otherwise safely ignored so long as nobody's foolish enough to travel there. The hags' petition to be included at Thronehold was proof enough that they desperately sought recognition by the rest of the nations, and their refusal would seem to spell the end of Droaam's nationalistic ambitions. Thus, the other nations keep only half an eye on the hags, allowing them unprecedented latitude to pursue their own objectives so long as they remain within their borders. More important, because outsiders do not think of Droaam as a nation that can be manipulated or conquered, they refrain from attempting political alliances with the aforementioned rebellious elements among the hags' own followers. The Daughters themselves control all major communications with House Tharashk, and thus all interaction with the other nations. The monsters of Droaam and the people of Khorvaire remain enemies to this day—thanks in no small part to the "failed" petition of the Daughters of Sora Kell.

Sierkaloth: NE male gnoll dire werebat ranger 3 (gnoll *MM* 130; dire bat *MM* 62; Str +6, Dex +12, Con +6).

Yrs: CN female changeling wereconstrictor rogue 4 (constrictor snake *MM* 279; Str +6, Dex +6, Con +2).

THE FAMOUS OR INFAMOUS

Other than the Daughters of Sora Kell, few of Droaam's natives are known individually throughout Khorvaire. The Daughters would like to keep it that way—especially given the nature of the region's most famous inhabitant.

Sklar, the Hag on High

NE female harpy truenamer$^{\text{ToM}}$ 8

Many of those unfortunate enough to encounter Sklar assume that she is some sort of hag, albeit one with an odd ancestry that grants her wings. Given her hideous appearance (even for a harpy) and mystical abilities, this is perhaps a reasonable mistake to make. Her sporadic association with Sora Teraza during the dusk hag's wanderings has only cemented that notion in the eyes of those who knew of her.

Sklar served as an occasional arcane mercenary in the war, usually demanding eldritch writings and secrets in payment for her services. Potent as she was, she might have been forgotten as just another minor warrior if it weren't for her history after the ascension of the Daughters of Sora Kell. Sklar holds the distinction of being one of the few powerful Droaamites who refused to bow to the ascended coven, yet who has also to date managed to escape destruction at the hands of the hags. Sklar follows a philosophy of anarchy and maintains that allowing any government dominance over Droaam—even one made up of "monsters"—means giving up a part of her identity and becoming more like (shudder) a human. At the present time, Sklar hires herself out as a guide or a mercenary, favoring assignments that allow her to work against the Daughters' interests.

MERCENARIES OF VALENAR

If Cyre hadn't first hired them as mercenaries, the Valenar elves would have found some other excuse to involve themselves in the Last War. Constantly seeking challenges, living a life devoted to the glory of defeating a superior foe to honor their ancestors, at one with the land they revere and the mounts who bear them, the Valenar couldn't possibly allow such a conflict to rage without them. More than one Valenar warband entered the battlefields of the Last War even when no payment was offered.

Most outsiders imagine the Valenar as psychotic killers, but the truth is that their methods are slow, methodical, and patient. The elves study foes, harry their flanks, cut off supply lines, and strike at their weakest points. The Valenar aren't numerous enough to hurl themselves headlong at a superior foe, but they are skilled and patient enough to whittle down even the largest and most well-supplied enemy. To this day, the Valenar hire themselves out to others and skirmish with their neighbors. Some among the Five Nations have theorized that the Valenar don't even really want the territory they claimed under the Treaty of Thronehold. They simply required a base from which to operate on Khorvaire, and a central location that would entice others to attack them.

MILITARY STRUCTURE

Valenar's cultural divisions are both social and military; there is no distinction between the two. The elves congregate primarily in large family units known as warclans, each consisting of dozens to hundreds of elves. On the field of battle, they operate in much smaller units. This is partly to enhance the individual glory of each warrior, and partly to prevent too much of the population being wiped out in a single defeat, but mostly because they don't need greater numbers to defeat most enemies.

Infantry

Although the Valenar are most well known for their cavalry, the majority of their forces use horses only for transport, preferring to fight, track, and hunt on foot. An infantry warband consists of two or three bands, led by a 6th-level elf ranger called a *raethalast*.

EL 9: A Valenar band is made up primarily of rangers, including the *thaliaen* who leads, but also has arcane power. The warriors wear studded leather and are armed either with a buckler and a scimitar or the vicious Valenar double scimitar.

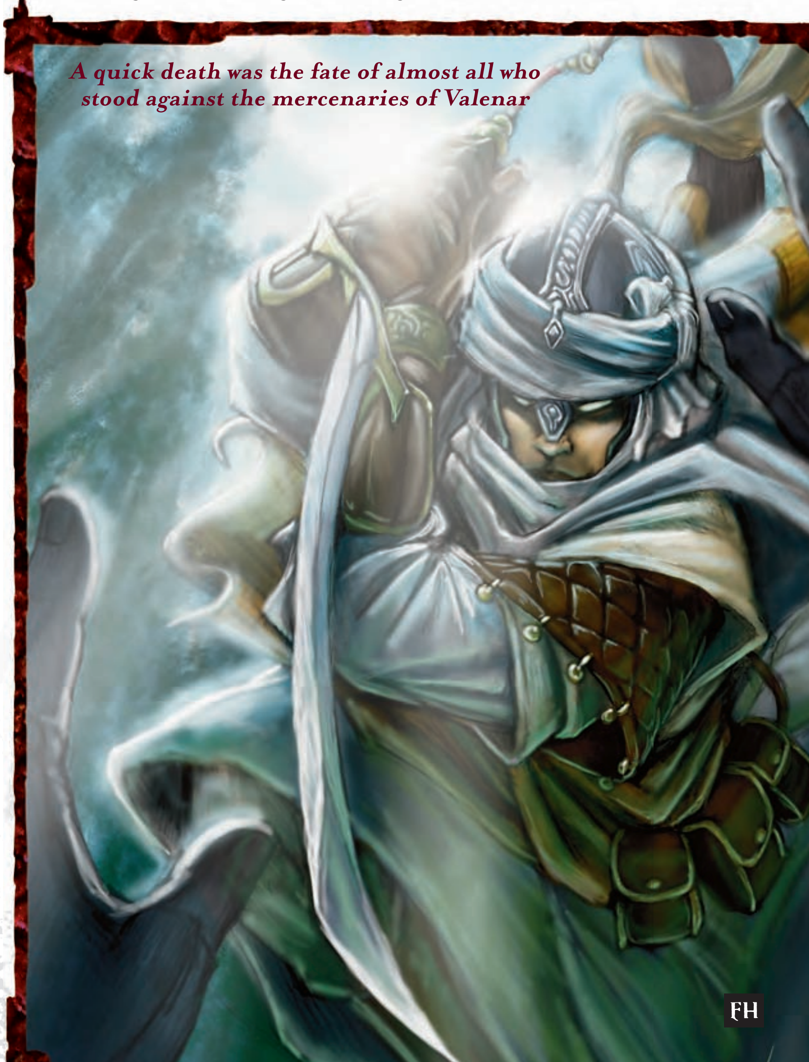
Thaliaen: elf ranger 5.

Arilthaels (4): elf ranger 4.

Iringael: elf evoker 4.

Cavalry

Few sights are more terrifying on the battlefield than a mounted warband of Valaes Tairn elves. These groups consist of two to four bands, led by a *raethalast* of 6th level (either a fighter or a ranger) on a light warhorse.



A quick death was the fate of almost all who stood against the mercenaries of Valenar

EL 10: A Valenar mounted band resembles an infantry band, with the addition of light warhorses. These soldiers are focused more on combat and less on tracking and stealth than their infantry counterparts.

Thaliaen: elf fighter or ranger 5.

Arilthaels (4): elf fighter or ranger 4.

Iringael: elf evoker 4.

Valenar Warhorses (6): as light warhorses (*MM* 274), but with +20 ft. speed, +1 AC, +1 Ref, +2 Dex.

VALENAR MILITARY RANKS

Title	Rank Equivalent	Rough Common Translation
Arilthael	Private	Crescent Blade
Iringael	Corporal	Blade of Fire
Thaliaen	Sergeant	Blooded Blade
Raethalast	Lieutenant	War-Leader or War Chief

General Tactics

The Valenar rarely engage in a direct charge, whether on foot or horseback. Only when facing a woefully weaker foe do they employ such straightforward tactics, hoping to clear the obstruction swiftly and move on to greater challenges.

Against larger military units, the Valenar make great use of stealth and mobility. They keep in constant motion, preventing the enemy from bringing large quantities of troops to bear against them. One Karrnathi general likened Valenar attacks against his army to the peeling of an apple. The elves circled the larger force in constant motion and random patterns, slicing troops off the edges like a rind. Every time the defenders formed for a counterattack, the elves scattered—sometimes for days—before returning to the fray.

Guerrilla warfare is perhaps the greatest Valenar tool; they use it against large forces, caravans, and non-mobile targets such as fortresses or towns. The elves strike from hiding, taking advantage of any cover or concealment the terrain might offer. Between their archers and their wizards, they can launch an assault from a distance, then move in under the cover of chaos and night.

The Valenar are patient. Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, they are willing to wait weeks or months for a victory that most combatants would try to achieve in days. When they lay siege, they do not attack the walls, but rather stalk the surrounding territory, slaughtering anyone who attempts to leave or—more important—anyone attempting to deliver supplies or intelligence. They pick off guards when they can, but otherwise are content to wait for the defenders to starve or to grow impatient and sally forth.

Perhaps the greatest secret to Valenar tactics—and victory—is that their concept of honor differs dramatically from that of many other races. Cunning is as prized as physical skill, and a victory against a superior foe is glorious no matter how it's obtained. Ambush, surprise attack, deception, and sabotage are all perfectly viable techniques to these warrior elves. Indeed, if a band of ten defeats an army of one hundred, it makes little difference if the elves did so by meeting the enemies on the field of battle, poisoning their food supplies, or silencing their sentries and killing the bulk of them in their sleep. Victory is victory.

ELITE UNITS

Compared to most of the other soldiers on the fields of the Last War, all Valenar elves could rightly be considered elite units. Even among the Valenar, however, some warriors stand head and shoulders above the others. An elite band of Valenar was one of the most terrifying presences on the battlefield, capable of wiping out entire armies on its own.

The Dusk Riders

When Cyre began hiring Valenar mercenaries, Elsaral Quilath was one of the first war chiefs to respond. Eager to test his blades and lead his forces into battle, he did not accept the Cyran offer through messengers or intermediaries, or even by traveling to Metrol and speaking with the Cyran generals. Instead, Elsaral led his warband to the Cyre–Karrnath border and obliterated a Karrnathi advance unit before other forces could even respond to its presence. Urban legend tells that Queen Mishann herself received a special delivery: the skull of a Karrn general etched with the words "We accept" in Elven.

Elsaral's warband, nicknamed the Dusk Riders by the amazed Cyrans, fought constantly throughout the war. Most of the time the Riders accepted assignments from Cyre, but at various points they took on limited tasks for other factions willing to pay. This situation continued up until the Day of Mourning, when the Dusk Riders were presumed lost en masse in the conflagration.

EL 16: Elsaral leads the warband and rides Bloodmane into battle. Thunderhoof is Orphalas's animal companion.

Elsaral Quilath: CN male elf duskblade^{PH2} 11.

Bloodmane: N male awakened light warhorse scout^{CAd} 4, *MM* 274.

Orphalas Gillaead: N male elf druid 10.

Thunderhoof: light horse, *MM* 273.

Kalasta Wryn: CG female elf fighter 7/revenant blade 3. (The revenant blade prestige class is found on page 142 of *Player's Guide to Eberron.*)

Talmein Iriist: CG female elf ranger 10.

Lancers (3): CG, CN, or N male or female elf fighter 6.

Scouts (3): CG, CN, or N male or female elf ranger 6.

Light Warhorses (8): *MM* 274.

The Dagger of Valaes Tairn

While Elsaral's Dusk Riders are known throughout the continent, feared but also greatly respected and renowned, the so-called Dagger of Valaes Tairn is rarely mentioned. Its members are certainly known to many of the Valenar elves—there can be little glory without recognition—but they are a complete mystery to members of the other nations. The Dagger doesn't hire itself out as a mercenary group. Rather, it strikes against known enemies of one faction or another, then demands payment for the service. Most nations and companies have found that it's far safer to pay, even if the help wasn't requested, than to refuse.

The Dagger of Valaes Tairn consists of experts in the most secretive, guerrilla tactics known to the Valenar elves. As the band's leader, Ilidris Kayael, has told her subordinates more than once, "Enemy arrows, enemy eyes. Let either strike you, and you die."

EL 13: This stealth-based band of Valenar strikes without warning.

Ilidris Kayael: N female elf ranger 6/revenant blade 4.

(The revenant blade prestige class is found on page 142 of *Player's Guide to Eberron.*)

Alar Siviel: N male elf ranger 8.
Luruna Pasaras: NE female elf scout^{CAd} 6/assassin 2.
Tlymir Kaest: N male elf ranger 6/revenant blade 2.
Ziria Vasuant: CN female elf ranger 8.

THE MOURNLAND

The Mournland is the physical embodiment of the Last War—bloodshed and destruction made manifest on the face of Khorvaire like an open, gaping wound. And just as Cyre was arguably the greatest victim of the war's beginning, so it suffered and gave all for the war's end.

So ingrained is the Mournland in the cultural consciousness of Khorvaire that it's hard for people to remember that the Day of Mourning occurred barely two years before the war's end. But then, it's always the greatest wound that ends a fight.

And it's a wound that did more than kill the nation of Cyre. None of the people of Khorvaire have yet recovered. The destruction of trade routes and fertile lands has had a far-ranging impact. More fearsome still is the notion that, to date, none have determined with any certainty what caused the Mourning. The fear that it could happen again keeps many a Khorvairian up at night.

THE MOURNLAND AT WAR

Although the Day of Mourning shocked the nations into beginning the long, drawn-out peace process, it didn't immediately end combat in the region. Uncertain what lay beyond the obvious devastation and the heavy mists, the surviving nations sent expeditions into Cyre. Some were slain by the horrific creatures now native to the Mournland, and others were warped and corrupted by the ambient magic of the place, but a few returned with news of the new terrain and its hazards. At times, rival units clashed within the waste, and in several instances—such as Thrane's famous "Midnight Marchers"—a brave or foolhardy unit actually traveled through the Mournland to strike at an enemy nation across its borders. The Swords of Kennrun, a Brelish unit of warforged, frequently attacked through the Mournland and then retreated into the fog, so that enemy troops would either have to let them go or follow into a region where their injuries refused to heal. The unit still operates today, serving as one of Breland's primary Mournland exploratory teams.

THE MOURNLAND TODAY

The Mournland frightens and fascinates no less today than it did when the deadly mists first swept Cyre from the face of Khorvaire. Border sentinels stand alert against monstrous incursions, and the Five Nations—still militarily on edge—sometimes view its fog-shrouded depths as a means of toughening up soldiers, or at least bleeding off excess hostility. House Orien desperately seeks some means of restoring safe travel through the region, and both the Gatekeepers and a moderate branch of the Children of Winter come from the Eldeen Reaches to study the Mournland.

Brillik's Tomb

Although New Cyre's citizens have an understandable interest in exploring and taming the Mournland, a few explorers have a much more specific purpose when they venture into these dark and twisted depths. Several surviving soldiers believe that General Alvos Brillik, one of Cyre's greatest military minds, was leading a legion out of Metrol on the Day of Mourning. Explorers want not only to recover his banner or his signet ring as a sign of solidarity, but also to locate *Hillcrusher* (see page 126), the legendary flail he carried into battle.

Even if explorers were to discover Brillik's resting place, it's unlikely they would live to report its location. Anyone who stumbles upon the ruins of Brillik's caravan is immediately attacked by dozens of swords, daggers, maces, and other weapons, all treated as appropriately sized animated objects (*MM* 13, but with a 40-foot fly speed and good maneuverability). In addition to the normal hazards of animated objects, any one of these weapons can attempt a touch attack on a target; if it succeeds, the subject must make a successful DC 13 Will save for each nonmagical melee weapon she carries. Each weapon for which the save fails animates and attacks its bearer. Whether *Hillcrusher* or Brillik's body or banner truly remains in the ruins of the caravan is anyone's guess.

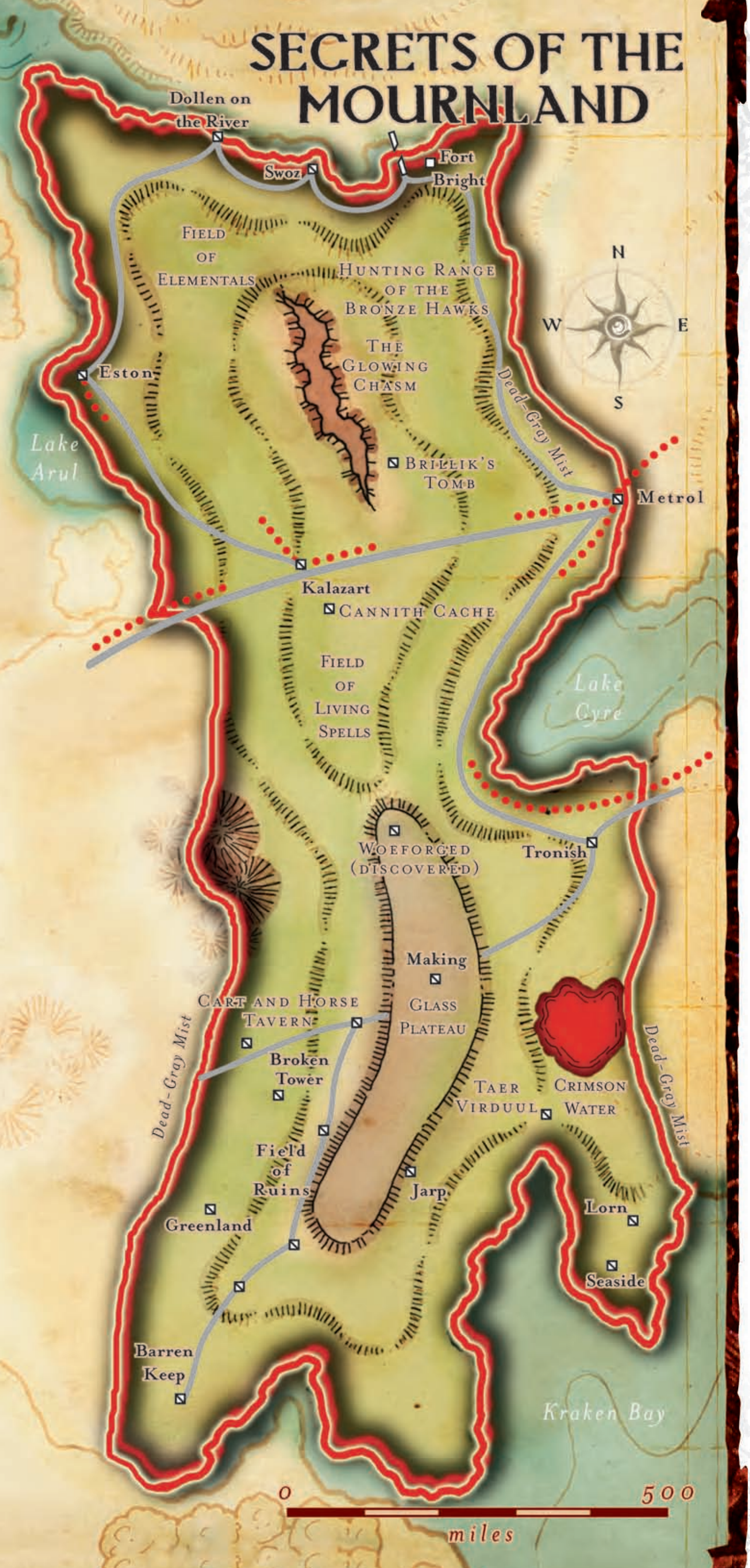
The Cannith Cache

All House Cannith branches, particularly Merrix's Cannith South, regularly send explorers into the Mournland, seeking to reacquire some of the lost research and creations from Whitehall and other strongholds. Merrix has offered a standing reward for any information leading to the rediscovery of such research. In addition to the known house holdings, rumor speaks of an enormous cache of Cannith weapons and creations hidden somewhere in the Field of Living Spells. Depending on what stories one hears, this cache contains traditional magic weapons, advanced warforged or golems, an actual creation forge, *eternal staffs,* or even a magic generator that allows the creation of items without drawing on the life energy (experience points) of the creator. If any of these rumors are true, the value of this cache could be incalculable—assuming anyone can locate it and survive long enough to retrieve its contents.

Explorers' tales span the spectrum, including: The cache is guarded by constructs larger than the mighty warforged titans and capable of sinking into the earth when inactive; the living spells were birthed in this installation, and rush to defend it; the destruction of the cache carved a path direct to Khyber, one less difficult for creatures from below to traverse; all warforged that enter the region immediately turn into mindless killing machines.

Hunting Range of the Bronze Hawk

One of the largest nongoblinoid mercenary companies employed by Cyre during the Last War, the Bronze Hawk consisted of nearly a hundred soldiers, commanded by Lzira "the Hawk" Orestos (N female human fighter 6). The Bronze Hawk was engaged in battle on the Karrnathi border on the Day of Mourning, and roughly half the company was swallowed by the mists. One of those lost was Orestos's lieutenant and husband, Albas (NG male human artificer 5). Tales told around military campfires and in soldier-frequented taverns maintain that Orestos and the survivors of the company have spent the last two years scouring the Mournland, searching for their


SECRETS OF THE MOURNLAND
Dollen on the River
Swoz
Fort Bright
Field of Elementals
Hunting Range of the Bronze Hawks
The Glowing Chasm
N
W
E
S
Eston
Lake Arul
Dead-Gray Mist
Brillik's Tomb
Metrol
Kalazart
Cannith Cache
Field of Living Spells
Lake Cyre
Woeforged (Discovered)
Tronish
Making
Glass Plateau
Cart and Horse Tavern
Broken Tower
Dead-Gray Mist
Taer Virduul
Crimson Water
Dead-Gray Mist
Field of Ruins
Jarp
Greenland
Lorn
Seaside
Barren Keep
Kraken Bay
0
500
miles

lost companions. They are said to be among the greatest experts on those blasted lands. The tales also claim that they have each been twisted—physically, mentally, or both—by the horrors and magic to which they have been exposed, and that they no longer know what it is they search for, merely that they must continue to hunt. The area in which they are most frequently seen has come to be known as the Hunting Range, and anyone who enters is subject to attack by obsessed and maddened warriors.

The Mistblades

Precious little is known about this mysterious sect. Born only months after the Day of Mourning, it appears to be made up of assassins whose only goal is to prevent the spread of information about the Mournland. Several explorers and soldiers who managed to return from the Mournland, alive and with new information, have been found slain days or weeks afterward. Left beside each body is a dagger hilt with a blade made of illusory fog. Only once have the Mistblades actually been encountered within the Mournland itself, in the ruins of the Cart and Horse, a roadside inn north of the Broken Tower. Some theorize this place to be the Mistblades' central redoubt, though no evidence exists to support this, and those who have proposed expeditions to find out for certain have been slain before they could finish organizing the journey.

Taer Virduul

The Valenar view the Mournland as a proving ground, and warbands frequently venture across the border to test their mettle. Quite a few do not return, but those who do are fully proven in the eyes of their comrades. Many who fail to return aren't dead, but have in fact been corrupted by the Mournland itself. Something about the bloodlust of the Valenar seems to call to the magic of the region. The result is a community of creatures that aren't quite Valenar any longer. They congregate in an area that the Valenar refer to as Taer Virduul, or "Camp of the Mad." The riders of Taer Virduul are all insane, consumed with pure bloodlust. Their mounts suffer the same affliction, and indeed evidence suggests that the Taer Virduul elves might share an empathic link or even a primitive hive mind with their mounts. Elves and mounts both are cannibalistic and cruel, torturing captives and even eating them alive. They make clothes and armor from the flesh and bones of their victims.

If you have access to *Heroes of Horror,* apply the tainted raver template (page 154) to both the elves and their mounts. If not, simply assume that each is in a constant state of rage (as the barbarian ability), homicidal and chaotic, unable to be reasoned with.

The Woeforged

The necromancers of Karrnath have made a horrific discovery deep in the gray mist. A band of warforged once assumed to be part of the Lord of Blades' cult are in fact nothing of the kind. Just as the warforged are "sort of" alive, they can apparently become "sort of" undead. These "woeforged," as the necromancers have come to call them, are rusted and broken, just as normal undead are often decayed, and they show the same affinity for negative energy as other undead. Where they come from, who created them, and what they can do remain unclear. The Karrns seek to learn more about them before deciding whether to share the discovery with others. The area marked on the map could indicate the full extent of woeforged territory, or perhaps simply the only place they've been discovered so far.

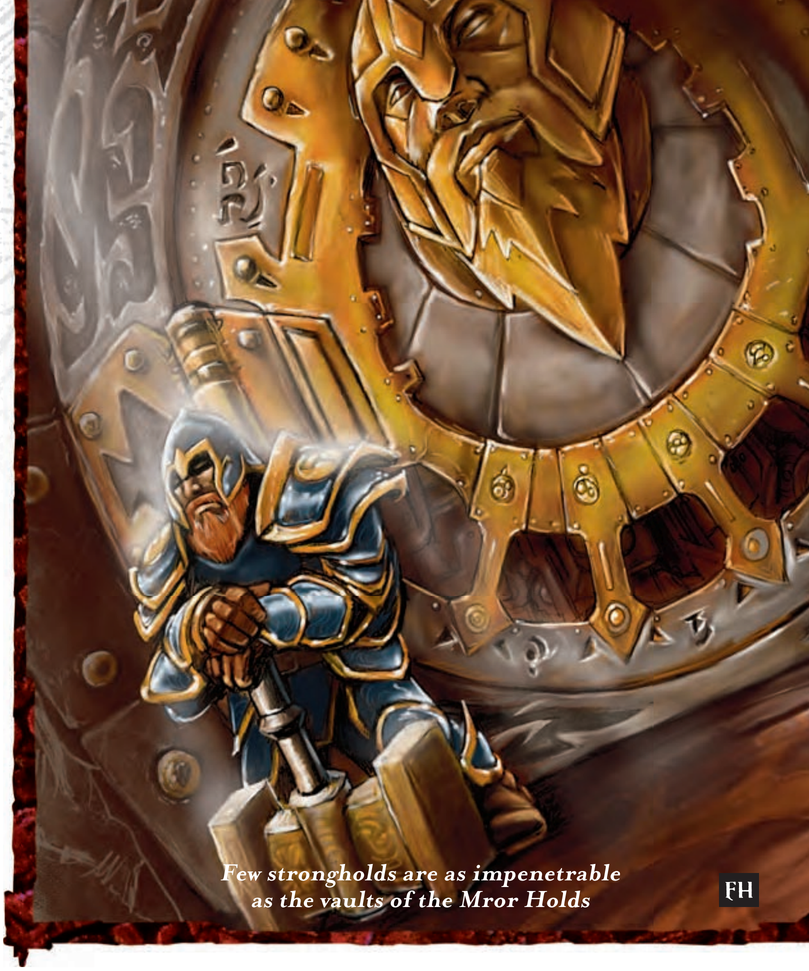
THE MROR HOLDS

In times of conflict, few people are more popular with the warring governments than those who command great wealth—and few have more influence. The dwarf clans of the Mror Holds made substantial use of the opportunities the Last War offered, but their inability to put aside their ancient clan feuds prevented them from obtaining the sort of lasting benefits they might otherwise have enjoyed. Many of the specific clans came out of the war with close economic ties to one nation or another, but because of their constant efforts to undermine their rivals, the Mror Holds as a whole have failed to cement any long-term arrangements.

KARRNATHI DOMINANCE

When the Last War began, and for the first two decades of the conflict, the Mror Holds remained under the thumb of King Kaius. While House (formerly Clan) Kundarak maintained its political neutrality, the Mror Holds as a province, and every other dwarf clan, were expected to support the Karrnathi war effort, just as all good citizens of the nations must do. The mineral wealth of the Ironroot Mountains went to forge weapons and armor for the enormous Karrnathi military. The wealth of the clans was funneled into the nation's war chest. Almost immediately, the leaders of the clans began grumbling among one another, resentful that they must devote their wealth and efforts to a nation that treated them as second-class citizens.

Twenty years into the war—a relatively brief time for dwarf policy to shift—the clan leaders assembled in the first Iron Council. Karrnath's attention was fully occupied by the war, and its soldiers busy on distant borders. Despite the ongoing feuds, the clan leaders declared themselves a unified government. Only Kundarak, still bound by the laws of the dragonmarked houses, remained apart. Even so, the house made no secret that it supported the sovereignty of the dwarves. The Mror Holds further declared their independence from Karrnath, and for all its military power, that nation could do little to refute the dwarves' claim.



Few strongholds are as impenetrable as the vaults of the Mror Holds

ECONOMIC ALLIANCES AND ANCIENT FEUDS

The independence of the Mror Holds did more than rip a guaranteed source of monies and raw materials from Karrnath's grip—it offered those resources up to the other nations. The dwarf leaders had been mercantile experts, bankers, and crafters since long before their independence, and they knew full well that a well-spent coin was far more potent than a well-aimed arrow. Every nation involved in the war received emissaries from the dwarves, each with similar offers: The clans were willing to provide large quantities of ore, entire shipments of weapons and armor, and substantial war loans that would not require repayment before the conflict's end. Costs and interest rates were high, of course, but a government trying to maintain a constant war footing rarely worries about monies due at a later date. Although House Kundarak had the greatest resources to lend, many governments were hesitant to put themselves in debt to a dragonmarked house any more than they had to, preferring instead to deal with a less politically powerful clan.

The long-lived dwarves, accustomed to clan feuds, have never been inclined to forget a grudge. Several of the clans wanted to deny Karrnath their services, or at least charge that nation higher rates, but common sense prevailed. Karrnathi gold spent just as well any other, and the dwarves already had economic and political ties with that nation.

The clans never forgot their feuds with one another, either. As the war continued, and each clan became more tightly associated with one or another of the warring nations, many dwarves began undercutting nations as well as their rival clans. Londurak might, for instance, make efforts to undercut Brelish merchants, or buy out supplies they desperately needed, for no better reason than the fact that its hated rival, Laranek, had business dealings with that nation. Many of the nations still bear grudges against the clans that worked against them during the war. This, as much as any other factor, has kept the Mror Holds as a unit from establishing closer relations with other nations in the postwar years.

THE MROR HOLDS AT WAR

The Mror clans didn't fight for territory in the Last War. They did not hire themselves out as mercenaries in any formal capacity (though individual clan members certainly did so). They had little interest in who became the next king of Galifar, or whether Galifar was even restored, so long as their own independence was maintained and the nations survived to repay their loans.

For all that, however, the clans saw substantial combat. Raiding parties, both renegade bandits and military units, sought to penetrate the dwarves' vaults and acquire the legendary wealth stored there. Dwarves were ambushed on the road and robbed of any cash they might be carrying to their clients. Nations launched deliberate strikes against clans supporting other nations. Karrnath offered a few tentative efforts, and one major one, to retake portions of the territory, though it was never able to devote sufficient resources to the task. Finally, several clans attacked their rival dwarves, trying to hide the assaults within the war's more general violence.

The Mror Holds have no organized army. The unified "government" of clan heads can barely meet in council without trading blows; fielding soldiers of mixed clans without bloodshed ensuing proved to be impossible. When the clans took the field, they fought alone.

And this was just fine by them. The dwarves had been fighting—against each other, against bandits, against the Jhorash'tar orc tribes—since well before Galifar annexed the Holds. Each clan was capable of fielding a force the match of any trained national army, without the cooperation of its neighbors.

Infantry

The dwarf clans fight almost exclusively as infantry. A platoon consists of two squads, along with an additional 3rd-level artificer or cleric. It is commanded by a 4th-level fighter or knight$^{\text{PH2}}$ called a vanguard.

A company is formed from two platoons and commanded by a 5th-level cleric, knight, or fighter who holds the rank of dux.

The largest force fielded by the Mror Holds is a regiment, consisting of two companies and commanded by a war-thane, normally a 6th-level fighter or knight. (War-thanes who gain additional levels frequently advance as dwarven defenders; see *DMG* 186).

Clan Drorantha is wilder than the others and fields barbarians rather than knights.

EL 7: A standard Mror infantry squad consists of half a dozen soldiers and three officers.

Veteran: dwarf cleric 3, fighter 3, or knight 3.
Champions (2)*:* dwarf fighter 2 or knight 2.
Soldiers (6)*:* dwarf warrior 1.

General Tactics

The dwarves of the Mror Holds are straightforward combatants. They prefer direct, toe-to-toe combat on an even field. They are, however, quite willing to take advantage of their home terrain, attacking from upslope or in the confined space of narrow mountain passes. When sheer strength is insufficient, the dwarves rely on their physical hardiness, attacking supply lines, launching hit-and-run strikes, forcing pursuit, and waging long-running battles of attrition in hopes of outlasting an enemy.

NATIONAL TIES

The clans of the Mror Holds didn't set out to create exclusive arrangements with the warring nations. After declaring independence from Karrnath, each clan dealt with anyone who was willing and able to accept its terms. Over the span of years and decades, however, these relations shifted and evolved, as various government officials grew comfortable with specific dwarf contacts. By the midpoint of the war, each clan was specifically, if not formally, associated with one or two nations.

These associations are far from exclusive; Clan Doldarun loaned funds to nations other than Aundair, for instance. These simply represent the most solid and long-term associations during the war years.

Further, these links go beyond loans and sales of ore and weapons. The rich and powerful of many nations paid the Mror clans to store wealth, goods, and heirlooms in their nigh-impenetrable vaults. They set up trusts with the dwarf bankers, so that heirs would not go impoverished if their elders were slain. All this, and more, not only solidified the clans' associations with the nations, but also their position as the continent's primary bankers. Many noble families still make use of these services today, and each of the Mror clans holds nigh-uncountable wealth in its vaults, stored for those who have been unable or unwilling to claim their possessions.

Clan	Associated Nation(s)
Doldarun	Aundair
Droranath	Karrnath
Kolkarun	Aundair, Zilargo
Kundarak	All (due to house neutrality)
Laranek	Breland
Londurak	Eldeen Reaches, Thrane
Mroranon	Breland, Karrnath
Narathun	Cyre, Lhazaar Principalities
Soldorak	Aundair, Thrane
Soranath	Thrane, Valenar
Toldorath	Darguun, Aundair, Karrnath
Tordannon	Darguun,Breland

The Shadow War

The Treaty of Thronehold formally ended the Last War, but it did nothing to put a halt to the underlying conflicts. The nations compete as constantly and viciously today as they did at the height of the war—they've simply found more subtle ways of going about it. A state of cold war and hidden conflict exists between all four of the surviving Five Nations, as well as the other lands recognized by Thronehold. Dubbed the "Shadow War" by the *Korranberg Chronicle*, this not-so-secret campaign could last for generations—or, with nary a warning, erupt into a new war that could make the "Last" one pale in comparison. Only one thing is certain: In whatever form it takes, this struggle is unlikely to end any time in the foreseeable future.

THE ARMS RACE

Inspired by true intelligence and simple paranoia, each nation seeks military supremacy over its neighbors. Though this stance is primarily for the purpose of defense, it's certainly possible that if one nation obtains overt dominance, it might launch a preemptive strike, hoping to end the next war before it begins. Currently, each nation has a clear advantage in one specific area.

Aundair: Although it has neither the strongest military nor the best intelligence, Aundair maintains its superiority in the field of arcane magic. Its various guilds and schools produce enough battle-capable sorcerers and wizards that no nation is yet prepared to field an army against it.

Breland: The King's Citadel, and specifically the Dark Lanterns, remains the most skilled intelligence organization on the continent. The forces of Breland might not be able to match the other nations on the field, but they're almost certain to have advance notice of any move against them.

Karrnath: Karrnath remains the dominant military power in the region. Its armies are larger, better trained, and better equipped. If it can find a way to counter even one of the other nations' advantages, Karrnath would almost certainly be the dominant power among the Five Nations.

Thrane: Unsurprisingly, Thrane holds the advantage of divine magic. It can field an army second only to that of Karrnath, bolstered by clerics capable of calling on the gods' favor, healing injured soldiers, and in some cases demolishing Karrnath's undead units.

The Last War might have ended, but the nations continue to struggle in the shadows

Other Nations and Dragonmarked Houses

Although the bulk of the Shadow War entry refers specifically to the surviving four members of the Five Nations, the information applies just as well to the other nations as well as the dragonmarked houses. These entities make use of similar techniques against one another, such as Orien's frequent sabotage of Lyrandar trade operations, and against the four primary nations. The dragonmarked houses certainly aren't above manipulating governments to their advantage.

EXPLORATION AND RESOURCES

One of the primary forms of (supposedly) nonviolent competition between nations is the race to discover and exploit new natural and magical resources. This is most obvious across the sea in Xen'drik. Here, Breland has the advantage of location, for the bulk of travel to and from that continent passes through Sharn. Indeed, Breland has learned more of the mysterious continent's secrets than anyone else, with the possible exceptions of the dragonmarked houses Cannith and Lyrandar.

Aundair, however, is ahead of the curve when it comes to arcane research, and the nation has been sending an ever-greater number of explorers into both the Eldeen Reaches and the Frostfell. Karrnath and Thrane compete for the hidden wonders (and exploitable horrors) of the Mournland, though Breland, particularly New Cyre, is devoting ever more resources in that direction.

In each case, nationalist advancement and pride are the primary motivators for these endeavors. Brelish citizens hate the notion of someone else taking advantage of Xen'drik before they do, while Aundair takes great pride in being more magically advanced than the others. This situation makes such expeditions and experiments primary targets for sabotage; even nations not competing for a particular resource don't necessarily want their rivals to have it. Several expeditions to Xen'drik, the Frostfell, or the Mournland have fallen not to native threats, but to ambush and sabotage by enemy operatives.

ECONOMIC WARFARE

Each of the nations levies taxes and tariffs on the import, export, and sale of goods, based in part on their point of origin or eventual destination. Any merchant selling Karrnathi goods—or, for that matter, any Karrnathi merchant—can expect to pay higher taxes in Breland than a Brelish merchant selling equivalent, regionally manufactured goods. Nations charge fees for the use of trade routes (unless said routes are controlled by Orien or another dragonmarked house), again often based on the nationality of the travelers or the origin of their cargo. At times, operatives of one nation might even destroy the stockpiled resources of another, in order to force them to purchase foreign goods at a hefty price. Aundair has, for instance, sabotaged various institutions that create magic items in other nations—even going so far as to secretly damage Cannith holdings—in order to encourage the purchase of Aundairian items.

ESPIONAGE, SABOTAGE, AND AGITATION

Spies travel back and forth between nations almost as frequently as merchants. Every nation is paranoid about the possibility of a new war, and each intends to be ready if that happens. Intelligence on a rival's military strength, economic activities, magical inventions, political rhetoric, and future plans is more valuable than gold, and nobody can afford to be without it. Although spying on a foreign power is technically an act of war, none of the nations treat it as such; capturing, questioning, and then either trading or executing enemy operatives has become almost a mundane matter. The majority of such spies dwell among the common populace, trying to pick up what intelligence and rumors they can, but a few have managed to infiltrate the upper echelons of government.

In some cases, these agents do more than report. Sabotage of military operations or magical creations, and even the occasional assassination, are par for the course. These acts, unlike "standard" espionage, are matters of great import, and could spark a border skirmish or a trade war, if not outright hostilities, so they are employed only when absolutely necessary. For instance, Thrane once risked over a dozen of its agents deployed in Karrnath to assassinate a Karrnathi necromancer reportedly working on a way to render undead immune to turning. The fact that all his experiments to date had failed was unimportant; the Thrane government couldn't take the chance of eventual success, because it would have tipped the balance of power between the two nations.

One of the most dangerous, but most effective, activities of these hidden operatives is agitation. If an agent of

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Though the King's Citadel and the Dark Lanterns (*ECS* 145 and *Five Nations* 69) are the most skilled and the most infamous of Khorvaire's intelligence services, each nation has its own organization designed to spy on its neighbors and rivals.

Aundair: Aundair's intelligence agency, the Royal Eyes of Aundair (*Five Nations* 24), often relies on divination magic and other mystical means of spying. Although the Eyes aren't foolish enough to ignore the use of mundane spies—many powerful individuals take steps to protect themselves from divination, after all—such magic does make up a large portion of their methods.

Karrnath: Karrnath does not have a single unified intelligence agency. Rather, each warlord has his own order of spies and operatives, who keep an eye not only on other nations, but also on the activities of other warlords. Officially, each warlord is supposed to turn over everything he learns to King Kaius, but most of them keep the most useful information to themselves.

Kaius, of course, fully expects his warlords to do just that. He has operatives within the intelligence services of the warlords—some voluntary, and some dominated through his vampiric abilities. Thus, even though his warlords believe they are keeping secrets, Kaius has as complete an overview as if he did possess a single national intelligence agency.

Thrane: The nation of the Silver Flame makes use of both divinatory magic and mundane agents, but to a lesser degree of effectiveness than in the other nations. It would be inaccurate to say that Thrane's intelligence service—the Silver Torch, as it's called—is ineffective. It is, however, newer and less experienced than its counterparts in other nations, and has not yet mastered some of their more advanced techniques.

one nation can stir up social or military trouble for another, this drains the enemy's resources and distracts them from their neighbor's activities. This activity can range from inspiring riots in starving or oppressed areas (see Thaliost, page 92), or even faking attacks on one nation and making another nation appear responsible. For instance, Aundairian agents, making use of illusion and enchantment magic, have managed to spark quite a few conflicts with the Valenar elves that have weakened Karrnath's forces in the Talenta Plains. (Not that it's really all that difficult to get the Valenar to go to war.)

SKIRMISHES AND MERCENARIES

Open violence still erupts from time to time. This primarily occurs across shared borders, but sometimes happens when rival forces meet on neutral or contested territory (such as Karrnathi and Thrane forces meeting in the Mournland). One nation makes a raid against another's community, and the offended government demands restitution or launches reprisal attacks. To date, none of these skirmishes has escalated into all-out war—sometimes to the chagrin of some citizens, who grow ever angrier at their neighbors' depredations. In some cases, nations hire or encourage others to do their skirmishing for them, such as paying Darguuls to attack Brelish border stations, or using halfling mercenaries to ambush Karrnathi caravans under the guise of "purifying" the Talenta Plains. Even when the victim knows an attack was politically motivated, it often lacks sufficient proof to justify public reprisal.

SHAVARATH: THE ENDLESS WAR

The plane of Shavarath, called the Battleground, is the site of an eternal war among numberless armies of archons, devils, and demons. If the Outer Planes can be said to represent abstract ideals in some way, then Shavarath is the plane of warfare. The residents of Shavarath are the best strategists, philosophers of warfare, and experts on the art of war on all the planes of existence, and during the Last War, the leaders of Khorvaire made many attempts to harness that expertise to aid one side or another in the ever-shifting battle to determine the fate of Galifar.

Shavarat h's movement through the Astral Plane brings it coterminous with Eberron for one year in every thirty-six. During these periods, its endless battles spill over into Eberron in various ways. Among the most frightening of these manifestations is the appearance of storms of whirling blades upon Material Plane battlefields.

Scholars are not in agreement about the precise location of Shavarath at any given time. One prominent school of thought holds that its proximity actually contributed to the eruption of the war, declaring that Shavarath was coterminous in 894 (the year the war began), 930, and 966. A smaller group of sages places the dates one year later, and a small minority claims that it was coterminous in 890 (before the start of the war), 926, and 962—and should draw near again in 999. Many people claim that the years during which Shavarath was coterminous were marked by particularly bitter violence, but those claims are difficult to verify. Reports of whirling blades appearing on battlefields occurred sporadically throughout the war, and cannot be exactly correlated to the plane's thirty-six-year period, suggesting that Shavarath might have held more sway over Eberron (or at least Khorvaire) during the Last War without actually being coterminous.

MANIFEST ZONES

In manifest zones, the influence of Shavarath lasts for long periods, sometimes indefinitely, without regard to the plane's position in the Astral Plane.

Ash Tower: A crumbling spire in the southwest of the Mournland, Ash Tower is the center point of a large manifest zone tied to Shavarath. Some say this manifest zone was created by the Mourning, while others make the fantastic claim that it actually caused the Mourning—that something emerged from Shavarath to cause the annihilation of Cyre.

Whatever the truth of these claims, Ash Tower now is home to a demonic construct, a retriever (*MM* 46) that crossed over from Shavarath. As a construct, this spider-like monstrosity has little to fear from the dangers of the Mournland, and some believe that the Lord of Blades has plans to use this creature for his own ends.

Fields of Desolation: This field is situated in the Talenta Plains, not far from the territory claimed by Karrnath. The smallest known manifest zone linked to Shavarath, it is no more than a hundred yards square, but this area has seen enormous bloodshed throughout the history of Khorvaire. Mundane geography might play a part in the site's importance, since the rolling hills around it tend to channel armies through the fields, but its ties to Shavarath are almost certainly more significant.

The critical threat ranges of all attacks made by creatures in the Fields of Desolation are doubled. Multiple effects that increase threat ranges (such as the Improved Critical feat, the *keen edge* spell, or the keen weapon property) do not stack.

Ravar Orioth: The Jungle of Scimitars on the southern peninsula of Valenar holds a peculiar manifest zone linked to Shavarath. The effects of the planar connection seem random, affecting individuals within the tangled woods without warning or discrimination. The Valenar elves believe that the jungle is a test for warriors to demonstrate their resolve and their readiness for battle. The other inhabitants of Valenar avoid the jungle as often as possible.

A character who takes lethal damage within Ravar Orioth must make a Will save against a DC equal to the points of damage taken. If the character fails this save, he falls immediately under the effect of a *confusion* spell, making his behavior unpredictable and possibly violent. In addition, he gains the benefit of a *rage* spell. Both effects last for 1 minute.

Tamor Gulch: Sometimes known as the Vale of Heroes, Tamor Gulch lies in north central Thrane, northeast of the town of Athandra. It saw little fighting during the Last War, at least in part because the effects of its manifest zone grant equal benefit to both sides of a conflict within the gulch. However, a small group of fanatical warriors gathers in Tamor Gulch every month to fight for sport, gathering small, exclusive crowds that wager large sums of money on the outcome of the matches. These bouts are fatal only occasionally.

A character who makes a melee attack within Tamor Gulch comes immediately under the effect of a *greater heroism* spell that lasts for 10 minutes. A character can benefit from this effect once per day.

Valin Field: See page 98.

Valley of Blades: A remote valley in the Byeshk Mountains, between the Eldeen Reaches and Droaam, is the site of a dangerous manifest zone. Whirling blades like the ones that roam Shavarath sweep through the valley periodically, shredding anything in their path. As a result, nothing grows in the Valley of Blades, and even the animals of the Reaches avoid it.

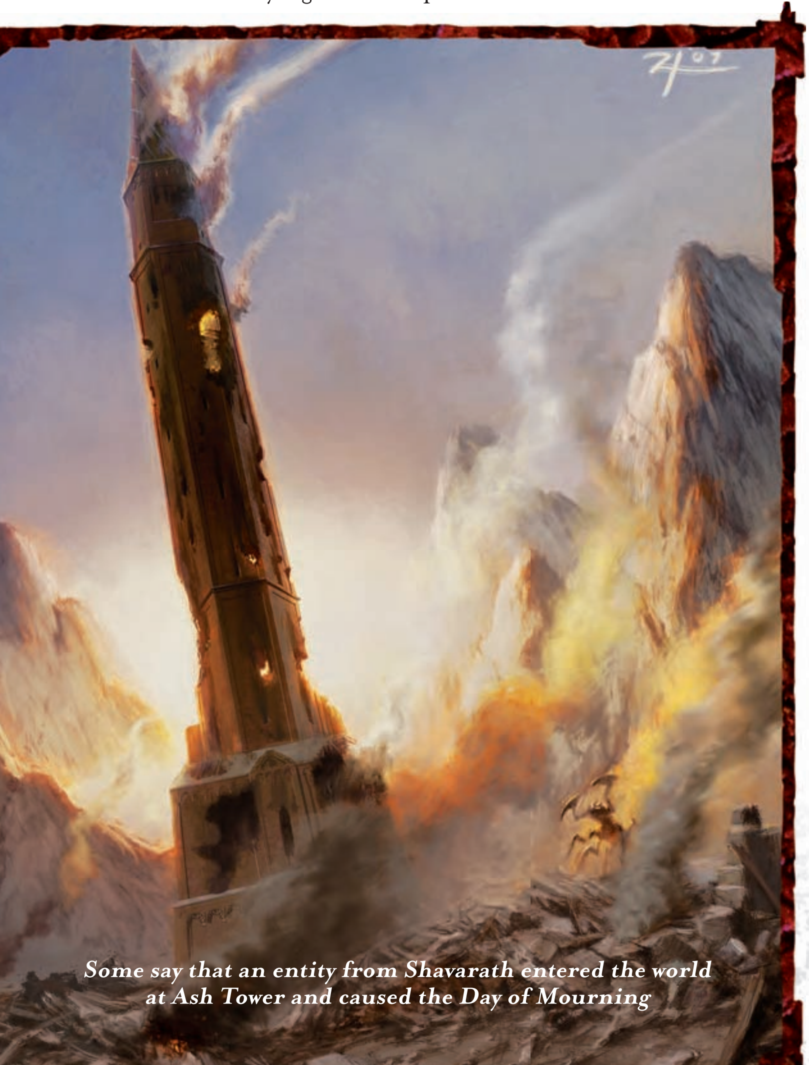
For every hour characters spend in the valley, there's a 40% chance of encountering a cloud of blades that attacks for 2d4 rounds and then disperse. In each of those rounds, the blades attack every character, using an attack bonus of +10 and dealing 2d6 points of damage on each successful hit. The blades are treated as magic and evil-aligned weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Legends tell of an ancient stronghold of the Dhakaan Empire situated in a valley within the Byeshk Mountains. Numerous expeditions have failed to uncover this stronghold, and many scholars now believe its ruins lie beneath the Valley of Blades.

IMMORTAL LEGIONS

Infrequently during the Last War, rulers and elite soldiers called upon the denizens of Shavarath to fight. From the Brelish King Kason's ill-fated attempt to bargain with a marilith in 922 to Thrane's archon-spearheaded assault on Cyre in 984, the record of mortal dealings with these outsiders is a blend of triumph and tragedy.

As creatures literally born for war, and in some sense embodying the concept of war, the natives of Shavarath were amenable to *planar ally* and other summoning spells, as long as they perceived (or could be convinced) that their participation could somehow further their own ideals or objectives.



Some say that an entity from Shavarath entered the world at Ash Tower and caused the Day of Mourning

For demons, that was an easy sell—these outsiders exist primarily to sow chaos and destruction. Fortunately for Khorvaire, it is not easy to summon large numbers of demons to the Material Plane at one time, or to ensure that they destroy only the people and places you want them to. For that reason, demonic participation in the Last War tended to be small in scale, short in duration, and often equally devastating to those who summoned the demons as to their enemies.

The archons of Shavarath were generally harder to convince that participation in the Last War could somehow serve their own interests. Initially, some of these outsiders showed sympathy for Mishann's legitimate claim to the throne of Galifar and the desire to restore order to the continent. Later in the war, archons were more often galvanized into action in the service of Thrane summoners or to act against some real or perceived evil, such as Karrnath's undead troops or various atrocities of war.

For their part, devils were drawn into the war as part of intricate bargains—bargains that rarely favored the mortal party. They occasionally arrived with little coaxing when archon or demon forces opposed them, but more often they stood to gain something significant in exchange for their assistance.

ELDRITCH MACHINES

A slightly different way in which the warring nations of Khorvaire tried to tap into the power of Shavarath during the Last War was through the construction of *eldritch machines*. For example, the Order of the Emerald Claw tried to build a machine in a manifest zone in Xen'drik, hoping to bring either a demonic horde or a swarm of flying blades from Shavarath and harness it under Karrnath's command. That attempt failed, but a handful of *eldritch machines*, such as the *reaper*, played a significant part in some major battles of the war.

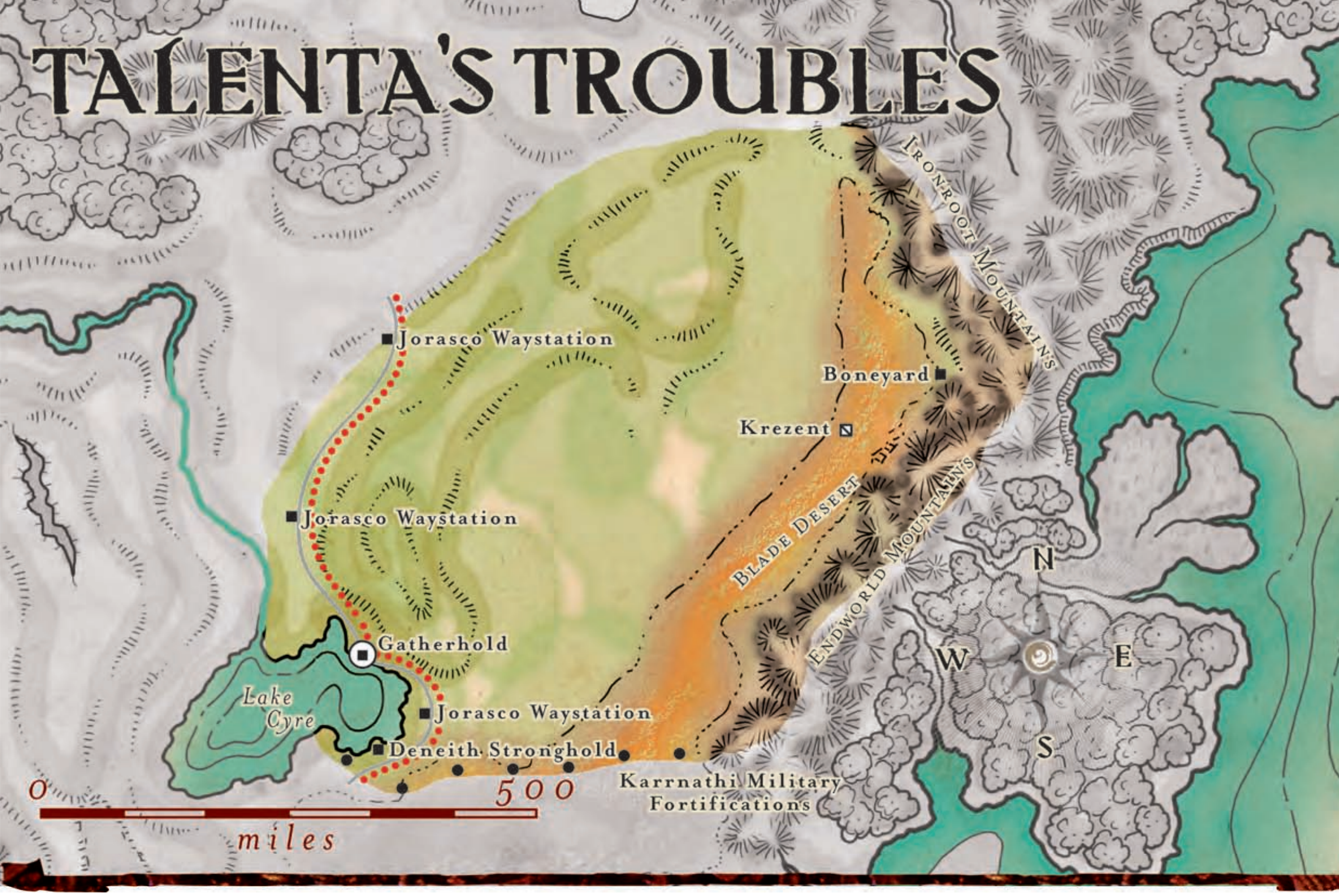
Reaper: The Order of the Emerald Claw built this *eldritch machine* in the Fields of Desolation in 963, and a group of adventurers destroyed it later that same year. A massive construction of steel, adamantine, and human bone, a *reaper* channels the properties of the site's manifest zone into weapons that are specially attuned to the machine. In effect, this machine was a massive-scale *keen edge* spell that proved to be marginally cost-effective, arguably tilting three or four minor battles in Karrnath's favor before it was destroyed.

TALENTA PLAINS

The Talenta Plains are among the most tragic of the Law War's battlefields, for the conflicts that wracked the plains, and the blood spilled to feed the tall grasses, were unnecessary. The halfling tribes had no vested interest in the Last War. The region offered few resources or territories worth fighting over. Had everyone simply ignored Talenta, the outcome of the war would almost certainly have been unchanged.

Yet war came to the Talenta Plains nonetheless, and in the years since the war, the violence engendered by that conflict has refused to fade.

TALENTA'S TROUBLES



THE TALENTA PLAINS AT WAR

The greatest battles in the Talenta Plains were between Karrnathi and Cyran forces—the latter primarily Valenar mercenaries. The open fields perfectly suited both the heavy cavalry of Karrnath and the swift elf warbands. Although some halflings attempted to repel these incursions, they swiftly realized that the invading forces almost always outnumbered even the largest of their tribes. For the bulk of the war, then, the halflings simply took steps to be elsewhere when these forces clashed, since neither the Karrns nor the Valenar particularly cared if a few stray halflings were caught between them—let alone the dinosaur and animal herds the armies scattered or destroyed in the process.

With the soldiers of the other nations came the dragonmarked houses. House Ghallanda had always been based in Gatherhold, and House Jorasco still maintained a presence in its ancestral homeland even after moving its central stronghold to Vedykar. Throughout the war years, however, Deneith, Orien, and Vadalis moved into the plains as well, either to serve the growing military population or to take advantage of the halflings themselves.

Drawn into the conflict despite themselves, some tribes took sides, either as mercenaries or due to similarities of attitude or philosophy. For the most part, they warred only against foreign forces, but on occasion halfling did fight against halfling. This infighting was often the result of old tribal feuds, given new impetus by the violence around them.

It swiftly became apparent, however, that the tribes suffered more from the constant conflict in the plains than they gained, and that the other nations weren't likely to cease fighting any time soon. Old feuds fell away, leading to a partial unification of the halfling tribes. They never abandoned their tribal identities, but they did cooperate with one another to an extent never before seen. By the time Lathon Halpum (CG male halfling barbarian 9) was selected to speak for the tribes as a whole, the halflings stood side by side to protect their people and their herds from all comers. So closely did the tribes work together that the other nations developed a false perception of the halflings as a whole. When Talenta was declared a sovereign nation at Thronehold, many people assumed it would be governed as a single people with Halpum at its head. The fact that the Talenta halflings still dwell and function in tribes, with Halpum universally respected but not revered or obeyed, confuses many a foreigner.

THE TALENTA PLAINS TODAY

The Talenta Plains are still a perfect battlefield, and even after the cessation of the war, some continue to take advantage of that fact. Old feuds still rage, and even the popularity of Lathon Halpum has led to new conflicts. The Talenta Plains are no less a magnet for discord today than they were during the Last War—and thus the tragedy of the halfling nation continues.

Factions

The following factions still maintain an interest and/or a presence in the Talenta Plains, a presence that threatens to erupt into a conflict capable of sweeping across the plains as swiftly as any wildfire.

Abramam: The single largest halfling tribe, family of the honored Lathon Halpum, has not found life any simpler since the Last War. Halpum wants nothing to do with ruling the Talenta Plains as a whole; he had the chance to become a great king after the signing of the Treaty of Thronehold and rejected it. Now, he looks at the chaos besetting Khorvaire and wonders if he made the proper decision. Halpum believes with all his heart that the Last War has merely gone quiescent, that it must erupt again and again until one power holds dominance. He fears the same is true of the halfling tribes, because the tentative peace and unification inspired by the war have already begun to fray around the edges. Egged on by others of his tribe—many of whom see an Abramam king as a tool to advance their own ambitions and settle old feuds—Halpum might soon be forced into an impossible choice: Risk losing the support and respect he currently enjoys, or make use of it and the military might of his tribe to carve out a throne he doesn't want.

House Deneith: Although its presence in the Talenta Plains is relatively recent, House Deneith finds the region profitable. Halfling mercenaries, particularly dinosaur riders, are currently popular among the wealthy of Khorvaire. The house keeps most of its strongholds near the Valenar border, where conflict with the elves produces the most skilled halfling warriors. While most halflings tolerate the presence of Deneith, some of the more traditionalist or nationalist factions believe the house takes advantage of their people and would be happy to see them gone.

Houses Ghallanda and Jorasco: Both of the halfling houses face the same problem in the Talenta Plains—many halflings believe they have abandoned their traditions at best, and are racial traitors at worst. Jorasco, which has moved its central operations to Karrnath, suffers this stigma more than Ghallanda, but both must constantly fight the accusation that they have sold out their halfling heritage, offered gifts for money that should more properly be used to benefit the Talenta tribes, and allowed outside powers to compete with the tribes for influence and resources. To date, this resentment has been expressed vocally and economically, but as Holy Uldra's teachings become more popular, it's possible that either or both houses could face violent opposition to their activities.

Hulrar: Led by Lath Errim (CG male halfling fighter 7), the Hulrar tribe is second only to Abramam in size and military might. Hulrar has close ties with House Deneith, and it is the source of over a quarter of all the house's halfling mercenaries. Errim holds great respect for Lathon Halpum, but thinks Abramam failed to take full advantage of its opportunities. Errim would prefer to see the Talenta halflings organized into a nation with semi-independent warlords, not unlike Karrnath, but as yet is unwilling to declare war against other halfling tribes to accomplish it. When not engaged in mercenary activities, Hulrar spends its time repelling Valenar incursions and speaking against the growing influence of the Sindrekel tribe.

Karrnath: Through arrangement with several of the great tribes (often enforced by hostages), Karrnath maintains a line of fortresses along the Valenar border. Though this does not prevent Valenar incursion, it does keep the elves from mounting a force sufficient to cross the plains and attack Karrnath directly. Many tribes resent having such a strong foreign military presence on their soil. Multiple-faction conflicts, between halfling tribes, Valenar invaders, and Karrnathi soldiers, occur with frequency around these outposts. Nor are all these skirmishes random: Various enemies of Karrnath, including Aundair and Thrane, have deliberately stirred up halfling or Valenar forces to harass the fortresses.

Q'barra: For thousands of years, some of Q'barra's lizardfolk have wandered into the Talenta Plains, hunting or herding dinosaurs and sometimes clashing with native mammals. In the years since the war, Newthrone has sent emissaries to the larger halfling tribes, seeking alliance for both trade and mutual defense. The settlers of Q'barra have no love for the Five Nations and maintain that the halfling tribes ought to feel the same. To date, few formal treaties have been signed, but several tribes are considering Newthrone's proposition.

Sindrekel: Although relatively small, the Sindrekel tribe is home to one of the most influential halflings in the plains. Lath Uldra (NE female halfling cleric 7 [Balinor]), called "Holy," seeks to return the Talenta halflings to the old ways. Unification of tribes, treaties with foreigners, cooperation rather than survival of the fittest—these are all a corruption of the true halfling spirit and way of life. Uldra's teachings have begun to spread through the various tribes, particularly among the younger generation who never knew the more open intertribal conflict that occurred before the unification of the Last War. Although Uldra has not yet directly encouraged violence against foreigners or tribes who accept them, her sermons are clearly leading in that direction, and several of her more aggressive followers have already shed blood in her name.

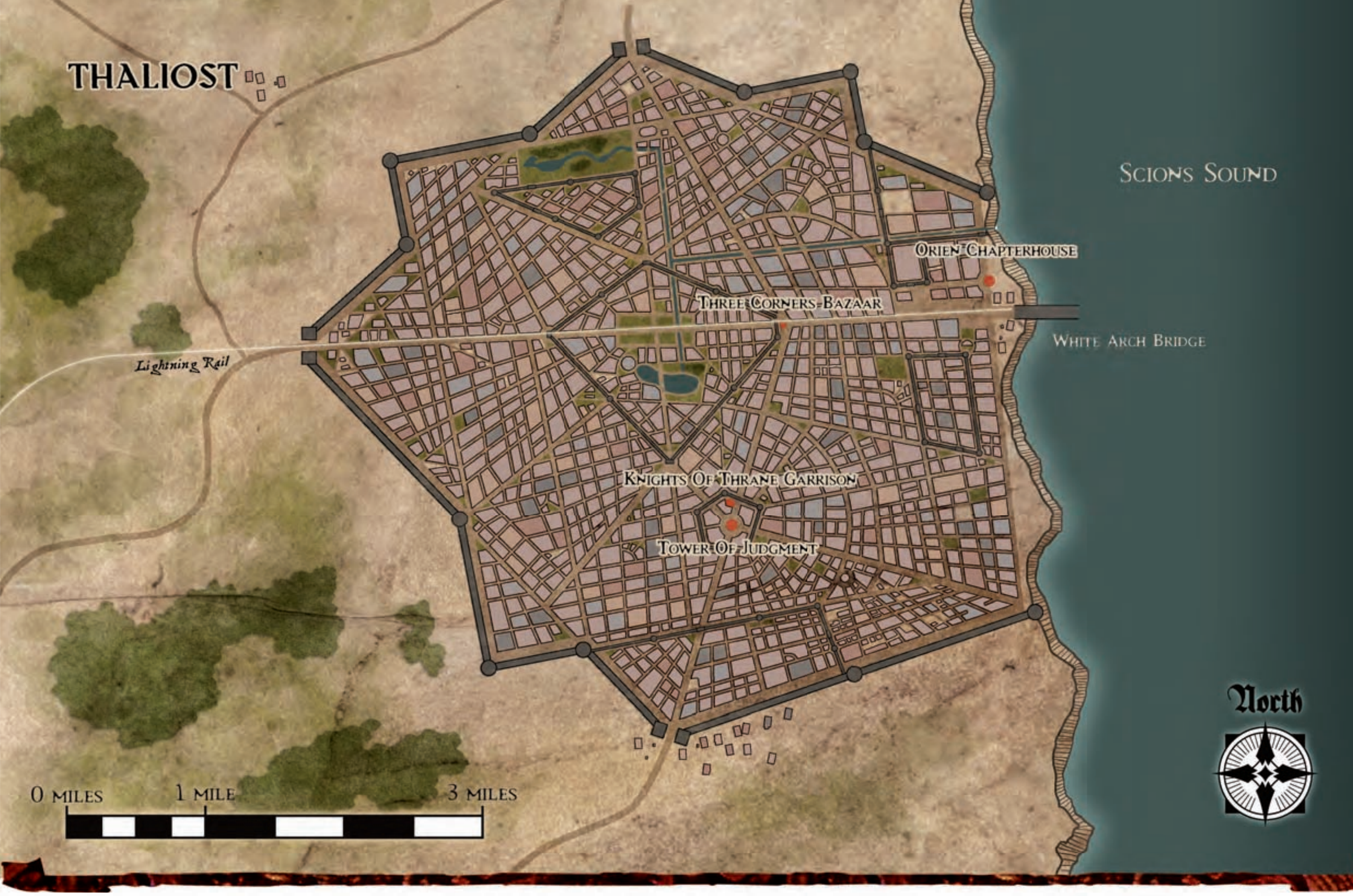
Valenar: The Valenar elves have no interest in peace with the Talenta Plains. Warbands cross the border on a regular basis, waging battle with Karrnathi garrisons or halfling tribes. This is not indicative of hostility against the halflings on the part of the Valenar as a whole. Rather, the warbands are engaged either in long-running blood feuds with individual halfling tribes or in simple exercises in which the band chooses a small tribe with few allies and hunts them as they would any other prey. Add to this the Valenar's desire to test their martial prowess against the Karrnathi soldiers and the wild dinosaurs of the plains, and the result is a constant state of simmering warfare between two peoples that don't actually want anything from one another.

THALIOST

Few cities have seen as much recent conflict as Thaliost. The crossroads of three of the continent's greatest powers, it has become the pivot point around which a number of bloody battles have been fought. Thaliost changed hands a half-dozen times over the course of the Last War, and today perhaps the only thing its citizens can agree on is that their suffering is not yet complete. The city has become a rallying cry for militants and nationalists of all stripe. If another great war erupts, Thaliost might be the spark that ignites it.

THALIOST AT WAR

Well before the start of the Last War, Thaliost, then one of Aundair's great cities, played host to a conflict of a different



sort. Its position at the junction of three great provinces, the ship-heavy Scions Sound, and one of House Orien's primary trade routes made Thaliost an economic power. Merchants and vendors of all nationalities came to the city to grow rich. Various dragonmarked houses and merchant consortiums attempted to one-up and undercut each other, hoping to claim the lion's share of the city's profits. Aundair clearly had the upper hand, since that nation collected taxes from every transaction, but the balance of power among the merchants fluctuated from government to house to private enterprise and back again.

Thaliost's position—literal and figurative—made it a prime target once the Last War began in earnest. Anyone who could take the city could not only plunder its riches and take advantage of its citizens' resources, they could strip Aundair of a primary source of income.

The first serious move against Thaliost came from Karrnath in 897, three years after the war began. Up to that point, Karrnath's efforts had been directed toward quelling mounting unrest in its starving population and curtailing large-scale Cyran raids. Thus, when soldiers swarmed over the White Arch Bridge in unprecedented numbers, they caught Aundair by surprise. Thaliost suffered surprisingly little structural damage or loss of life, other than the members of the garrison futilely stationed there to protect against incursion. Many history books don't even bother to record this conquest, however. Aundair retook the city less than a year later, in conjunction with Cyre, to whom King Wrogar promised a large portion of the recovered wealth. By timing their attack on Thaliost to occur simultaneously with a major Cyran offensive, Aundair forced Karrnath to choose between holding conquered territory in the west, or protecting its assets in the south.

Thaliost fell again in 912, this time to the forces of Thrane. That nation was able to ward off Aundair's attempt at regaining lost territory until 914, when the death of King Thalin and the ascension of the Church of the Silver Flame briefly threw Thrane's extended forces into confusion. Taking advantage of the chaos, Aundairian General Mather Naklest (LN male human knight^{PH2} 9) led an expedition that retook the economic center.

Three new attempts to take the city—one by land (Thrane), two by sea (Karrnath)—were repelled over the next twelve years, but the city's defenders finally fell for the last time in 926, when Thrane once again occupied not only Thaliost but the surrounding territories. Neither a major Aundairian military effort to retake the city in 927, a commoners' uprising one year later, a Karrnathi assault in 963, nor dozens of raids and skirmishes over the years have managed to shake Thrane's hold on the territory. Thaliost was formally ceded to the occupying force by the Treaty of Thronehold at war's end.

THALIOST TODAY

The Last War hasn't ended in Thaliost—the fighting has merely quieted, in the eye of a storm that most citizens cannot comprehend ever fading entirely. Some treat the Knights of Thrane as an occupying force; others undercut or sabotage the businesses of neighbors who descend from a different nation. Spies and agitators are thick on the ground, and crime runs rampant.

Factions

Many factions struggle behind the scenes of this once-great city, and even if this tension doesn't spark the next great war, violence is almost inevitable.

Aundair: Formally, Aundair has recognized Thrane's right to Thaliost and its surrounding territories. Informally, Aundairian agents continue to spy on the city and agitate social unrest. If and when the city erupts into violence, Aundair intends to move in and use the safety of the city's people as justification for violating the Treaty of Thronehold. In the interim, the majority of Aundair's people despise the fact that their government ceded Thaliost, and they make frequent demands for immediate military action to retake territory that is theirs "by right."

Aundairian Citizens: Many Thaliostian citizens of Aundairian descent live a tiring, joyless life. Forced to suffer at the hands of Thrane oppressors, many view Aundair with hatred, feeling abandoned, while others simply resign themselves to the notion that their nation of origin lacks the power, or the spine, to rescue them. Though this glum outlook often results in depression and timidity it sometimes erupts in anger and riots. The community as a whole hasn't tried to rebel since the residents' grandfathers were brutalized by church forces in 928, but if groups such as the Scions Liberation Front ever have their way, the population of Aundairian-blooded citizens might again rise up en masse.

Breland and Karrnath: As the only surviving member of the Five Nations that doesn't share a border with Thaliost (or at least the contested territories), Breland would seem to have little vested interest in the region. In truth, agents of the King's Citadel work in secret to keep tensions as high as possible without seeing them boil over. Neither peace nor open violence in Thaliost serves Breland's interests, for so long as the city remains in a state of flux, it draws the attention of all the surrounding nations—and takes that much of their attention away from Breland's own activities. The most experienced Citadel agent in Thaliost is Jenarra Kole (N female human rogue 7/dark lantern 1; see *Five Nations* 69), who masquerades as a jewelry and art importer.

Karrnath, too, has a vested interest in keeping the pot of Thaliost bubbling. Even after the destruction of the White Arch Bridge, Thaliost represents a potential gateway into that nation for two of its greatest rivals. By agitating to keep Thaliost in a state of unrest, Kaius's agents force his enemies' attention toward each other rather than eastward. Karrnath's chief instigator in the city, Borval Rikartiol (LE male dwarf rogue 6), occasionally cooperates with Jenarra, though both also keep a close eye on one another.

Church of the Silver Flame: Many Thranes are content with Solgar Dariznu (LE male human cleric 8 [Silver Flame]), the Archbishop of Thaliost. They see him as a loyal patriot trying to do an impossible job in controlling the "ungrateful and bloodthirsty" citizens of the city. Many members of the Church of the Silver Flame, however, have grown increasingly horrified at the brutal methods Solgar uses to enforce his rule. A growing faction within the church, emboldened by rumors of support from Keeper Daran, seeks Solgar's removal. It hopes to replace him with someone who can keep order more diplomatically, without resulting to public burnings and the like. This faction's current spokesperson, Oura Gellast (LG female half-elf paladin 5), has survived three assassination attempts. Though she has not made her suspicions public, she fears that Solgar himself is responsible.

Golden Crow: Thaliost's great wealth and constant unrest form a perfect opportunity for thieves and other criminals. Several bands and guilds operate within the city, but by far the largest and most sinister is the Golden Crow, so called because of the tiny pyrite statuettes left at many of the group's crime scenes. Led by a shadowy figure known only as the Platinum Man, the Crow appears to have its fingers in almost every gang, guild, and syndicate in the city, and is an important stop on the Black Highway. The Golden Crow eschews violence where possible, but several individuals who have interfered with its activities or begun investigating the group have turned up dead.

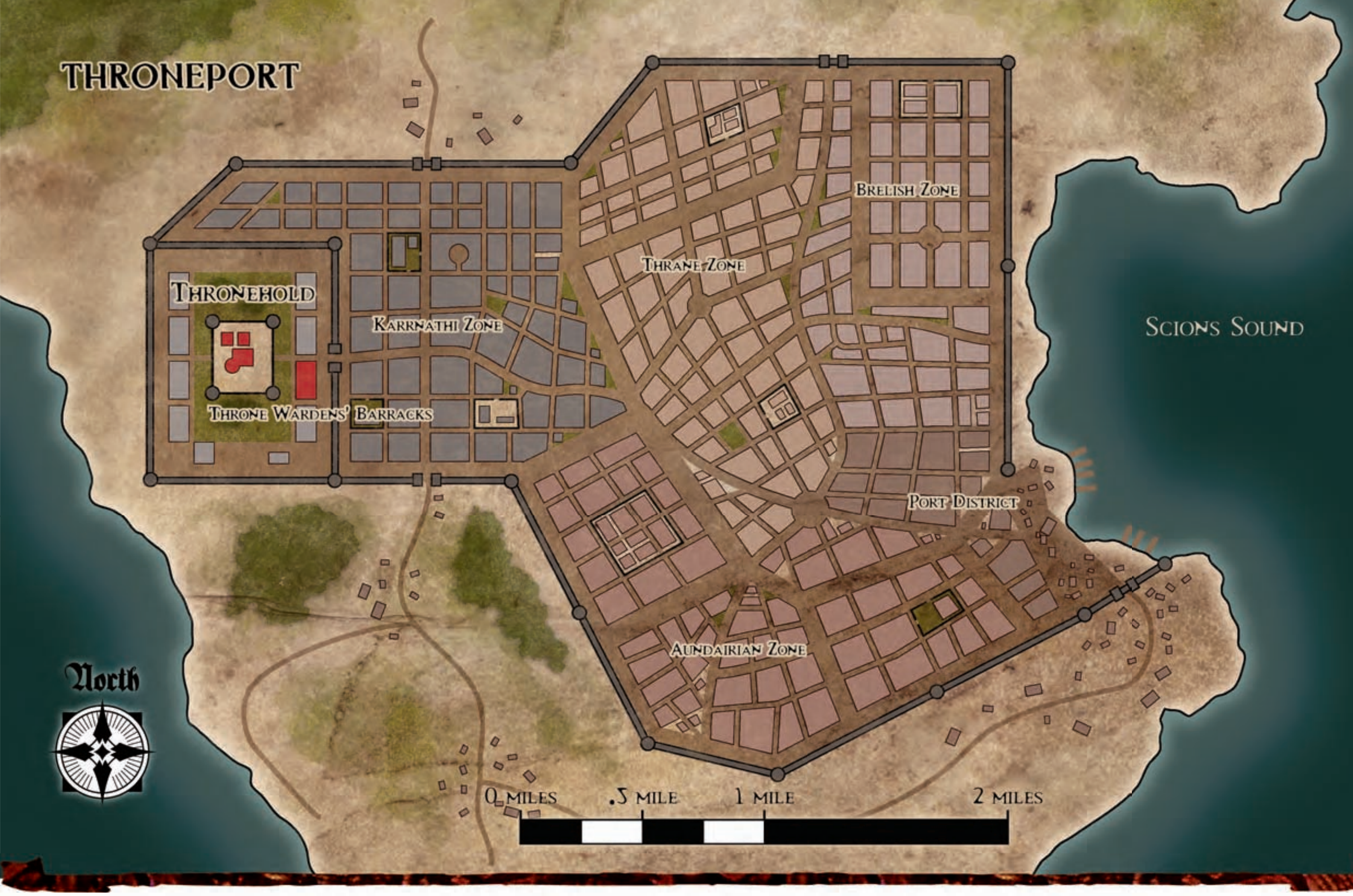
House Orien: One of the few factions advocating peace in Thaliost, House Orien hopes to rebuild the White Arch Bridge and restore the lightning rail that once crossed it. Although the house has spent large quantities of money and political capital here, trying to smooth over the differences between the various factions, it has so far proved incapable of calming the region. Until it does, Orien's leaders are unwilling to devote the resources and effort at rebuilding a bridge and route that might just be destroyed again.

Scions Liberation Front (SLF): Not every citizen of Aundairian descent is willing to accept the Thrane "occupation." The Scions Liberation Front is, depending on whom one listens to, either a group of devout freedom fighters or a band of brutal terrorists. With cells and hidden assemblies in both Thaliost and across the Aundairian border, the SLF attacks merchant caravans, sabotages military operations, and sometimes blows up entire government buildings. Nobody knows for certain who (if anyone) leads the SLF, but the Thrane government has accused Aundair, Breland, and Karrnath of supporting the organization at various points—accusations that all three governments vehemently deny.

Thrane Citizens: Thaliost's Thrane-descended citizens live in a twin state of prosperity and fear. Almost all of the city's upper class, and certainly its governors, are Thrane by descent. Where others just scrape by, they grow wealthy, taking full advantage of the city's valuable location. On the other hand, Thrane citizens are the most frequent targets of Aundairian anger when those people do rouse themselves to action. Many a wealthy merchant or official has been found beaten in an alley, lynched, or simply turned up missing.

THRONEPORT

A small city full of dissidents and mercenaries, Throneport would not be particularly important except for one simple fact: It is not part of any nation of Khorvaire. Growing up around the royal castle of Thronehold on an island in Scions Sound, Throneport was originally a small town that made the castle more livable, offering food and drink, entertainment, and other supplies to the soldiers and nobles stationed in Galifar's capital. With the death of King Jarot, the outbreak of war, and the virtual abandonment of Thronehold, however, Throneport



became a haven for spies, criminals, mercenaries, and revolutionaries. In the wake of the war, Throneport has been divided up into zones controlled by the remaining four of the Five Nations, and it remains a hotbed of international intrigue.

THRONEPORT AT WAR

When Jarot died and Mishann's siblings prevented her succession, the royal throne at Thronehold fell vacant, and the stronghold itself was gradually abandoned. For a time, the population of Throneport dwindled away as well. Many of its people were part of a retinue that had followed the royal court from Thronehold to the capitals of the Five Nations on seasonal visits, and with no more royal court to follow, they drifted off to other cities, sometimes parlaying their royal connections into positions with other noble families. The Throne Wardens, special forces of House Deneith assigned to protect the castle, remained in place, tending the vacant seat of power in the expectation that order would soon be restored and a royal heir of Jarot once again installed on the throne.

As the war progressed, Throneport began to see a new rise in population and activity. It was soon recognized as a place where illegal and clandestine business could be carried out away from the watchful eyes of national governments. Brelish spies working in Rekkenmark went to Throneport to meet their handlers or drop coded messages. Black Highway smugglers carrying contraband weapons harvested from battlefields brought their wares to Throneport to deliver them to Cyran buyers. Many deserters landed in Throneport, resulting in military sweeps by several nations looking for these deserters. Press gangs periodically roved the streets looking for able-bodied soldiers of any nationality and forced them into service for one nation or another, or (more often) for a mercenary company.

After the destruction of the White Arch Bridge in 928, Karrnath briefly toyed with the idea of using Throneport as the staging ground for an assault across Scions Sound. However, the Throne Wardens denied Karranth's ships permission to land on the island, and Karrnath made the assault without making use of Thronehold at all. In general, the castle of Thronehold remained almost miraculously untouched by the war, while the city of Throneport was a hotbed for what some have called "the war behind the war"—the thick web of intrigue and espionage that underlaid the clash of armies.

THRONEPORT TODAY

Throneport remains a key site in the Shadow War that rages on in the wake of the treaties signed in the castle. As a result of the Thronehold Accords, Throneport is divided into four zones, each one controlled by one of the surviving Five Nations—Karrnath, Breland, Thrane, and Aundair—with the Tower Wardens keeping watch over the whole city and ensuring that the accords are obeyed. Each zone of the city is like a small nation in its own right, and a person passing from one zone into another is subjected to the same scrutiny she would experience crossing a national border on the continent. Identification papers are a must—residents and visitors are required to show them on demand, even if they do not cross from one zone to another.

In theory, all this security is aimed at reducing the espionage that keeps the city running. In reality, each of the four nations that has a stake in Throneport would like to prevent the others from carrying on their clandestine operations in the city, while allowing its own spies to operate without hindrance. What this means is that spies and criminals have developed elaborate ways to circumvent the safeguards and restrictions designed to interfere with their operations, and innocent people are faced with endless bureaucratic hurdles in the course of pursuing their daily work.

In a city that relies so heavily on documentation, accomplished forgers are in high demand, and officials who can issue documents are often tempted with large bribes and other favors. A spy defecting from Breland to Karrnath might come to Throneport with Brelish papers, purchase the proper identification and traveling papers, and leave the city as a citizen of Karrnath, virtually guaranteed safe entrance into his new country. A monarchist fleeing theocratic persecution in Thrane might come to Throneport—where she will find many sympathetic ears—and eventually acquire identification and traveling papers showing her to be an Aundairian, which allows her to return to the continent despite the vigilant eyes of Thranes who seek to imprison her.

Besides identification and traveling papers, the other hot commodity in Throneport is information. Private inquisitives, mercenary bounty hunters, House Medani agents, and agents of national espionage agencies such as the Royal Eyes of Aundair all jostle together in the city's busy streets, spying on each other and just about everyone else in the city. For every person in Throneport who tries to disappear by purchasing false identification papers and a new identity, another person in Throneport is probably there hunting for a fugitive, an escaped dissident, or some other missing person.

Except for the Throne Wardens of House Deneith and isolated inquisitors from House Medani, the dragonmarked houses are all but absent from Throneport. House Sivis is not involved with the bustling document trade in the city—at least, it is not officially involved—and both House Phiarlan and House Thuranni seem strangely absent from all the spying and surveillance in the city. It is almost certain that members of every dragonmarked house live in the city and work in some capacity related to the work of their houses, but as organizations, the houses are not major players in the city. Perhaps they fear that involvement in the tangled politics of Throneport would pose too great a risk to their enforced neutrality.

THE TRIBUNAL OF THRONEHOLD

The former capital of Galifar stands to this day as neutral ground, accessible to all nations but belonging to none. Thronehold Castle is still maintained by the Wardens of House Deneith, and remains off limits, but every other foot of land on the island belongs to every citizen of Khorvaire. Everyone knows that it was here that the warring nations hammered out the Treaty of Thronehold that ended the Last War.

The treaty did far more than that, however. The "warforged question," the Sentinel Marshals, the settlement of borders—all these issues and more were addressed in the months of negotiation. So, too, was the issue of war crimes. The independent nations of Khorvaire had no central authority to whom they could turn to levy charges against citizens and military leaders of other countries. The Last War saw many atrocities committed in the name of kings and gods, and the populaces cried out for someone with the power to convict and sentence those responsible.

Thus did the treaty establish the Tribunal of Thronehold, a court that rules from the neutral island, ensconced in a wing of the castle. From here, the long hand of justice, supported by all sovereign nations, reaches across the continent to smite those responsible for the worst horrors of the war.

Or, at least, so the politicians would have the citizenry believe. The truth is, for all its symbolic importance, the Tribunal has very little true power. Thwarted at almost every turn by the very nations that formed it, it struggles to carry out its mandate in the face of ruling classes that simply want to put the Last War out of their minds—or else reignite it into an even larger conflagration.

THE TRIBUNAL ESTABLISHED

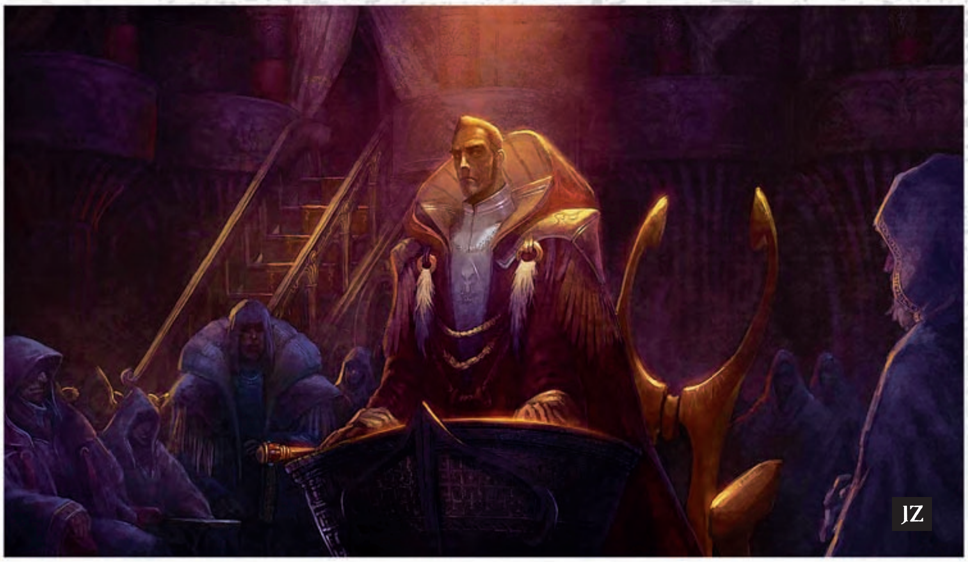
The Tribunal of Thronehold was almost an afterthought to the treaty. Although the documents that could confirm this assertion are sealed, most people claim that King Boranel of Breland first suggested the formation of a multilateral court, following months of bickering and fighting among the rulers and representatives. Many of these arguments were sparked by accusations of war crimes and atrocities between rivals, and some people believe that Boranel's primary motivation was to end the arguments, not to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The formation of the Tribunal added several weeks of deliberation to the Treaty. Thrane wanted an exemption for formal inquisitions carried out by the Church of the Silver Flame. Queen Aurala of Aundair wanted

POSTWAR THRONEPORT

If you've ever seen *Casablanca* or the classic noir thriller *The Third Man*, you'll understand why Throneport is here. Like real-world Vienna or Berlin in the wake of World War II, Throneport is a city divided up among the nations that survived the war. Instead of an American, a British, and a Russian district, it has zones controlled by Aundair, Breland, Thrane, and Karrnath—but the point is the same. It is a hotbed of international intrigue, a place where no nation holds sway but every nation has a presence. When you play in Throneport, try to keep those classic movies in mind.

a strict definition of a "war crime" as opposed to a "military operation with civilian casualties." Kaius refused, initially, to subject his warlords' troops to foreign oversight. The hobgoblins of Darguun had to have the human concept of "war crimes" defined for them. And so on, and so forth. Eventually, like all else regarding the treaty, this issue was hammered out. The Tribunal's first magistrates were assigned from the ranks of the participating nations' nobles and politicians.



A war criminal is sentenced at the Tribunal of Thronehold

Magistrates of the Court

The Tribunal of Thronehold consists of ten magistrates, one from each of the treaty's signatory nations, with the exceptions of Q'barra, which refused to recognize the court's authority, and Valenar, which simply had no interest in participating except as hired "retrievers." Magistrates from Aundair, Breland, Karrnath, and Thrane hold the power of two votes each, while every other magistrate has one. It requires a simple majority for the court to agree to hear a particular case, and to demand the appearance of an accused war criminal, but it requires a two-thirds majority for conviction and sentencing.

The following list enumerates the current roster of the Tribunal, including each member's nationality.

Adias Navel, Aundairian, LN female human aristocrat 3
Berem Lann, Brelish, LG male human aristocrat 2/expert 2
Crick, Lhazaar, LE male(?) changeling expert 3
Evam Taralos, Thrane, LN male human aristocrat 3
Imbrala Luun, Eldeen, NG female shifter adept 4
Imra Irandra, Talentan, NG female halfling fighter 3
Jalara Sholkaran, Zil, LG female gnome beguiler[PH2] 2
Olaf Stonebrow, Mrorian, LN male dwarf aristocrat 4
Syan Jarus, Karrnathi, LN female half-elf knight[PH2] 2
Vhuklok Vant, Darguun, LE male hobgoblin fighter 2

THE TRIBUNAL IN THE WORLD TODAY

The Tribunal of Thronehold holds an immense amount of symbolic power. It represents the efforts of all (well, most) nations to seek justice for the worst offenses of the Last War. It shows that they can unify behind higher matters than war, that they can cooperate for the good of all.

Symbolic power, however, has not translated to much real power. By the strictures of the treaty, all nations must cooperate with the Tribunal, turning over records, evidence, and accused war criminals when requested. Most of the nations are quick to accuse rivals of stalling, but are remarkably hesitant to turn over their own materials and "fugitives." The Tribunal lacks the personnel to hunt down and take most accused by force, so it must reserve such efforts for only the most heinous and fearsome war criminals. Nations might bring economic pressure to bear against their neighbors at the request of the Tribunal, in hopes of forcing a resolution, but many will not risk their own trade status by doing so, and none will launch military missions for these purposes. Thus, the Tribunal is largely limited to issuing a writ of accusation—a declaration of an individual's accused crimes, and an insistence that he turn himself in—since it can rarely force an individual to appear.

All the signatory nations are required to provide fifty soldiers for the Tribunal's use, forming an "army" five hundred strong. Most soldiers see this duty as either a cushy assignment or an exile; few take it seriously. These soldiers serve little more than a symbolic purpose; they aren't really needed to guard the island, because House Deneith does that, and they aren't a sufficient force to invade a sovereign nation in search of a fugitive. (Even if they could, the Tribunal is unwilling to send troops to invade its member nations, since it is justifiably afraid of divided loyalties.) Thus, these troops do little more than serve as court bailiffs, bodyguards for the magistrates, and jailers for the occasional accused criminal the Tribunal does manage to drag in.

The ten nations also provide a small amount of money to the Tribunal each year, to keep the court operational. From this treasury, the Tribunal draws funds to hire Deneith, Medani, or Valenar mercenaries when it thinks the charges against a war criminal are so severe that he or she must be brought in. These "retrieval teams" are hated by the sovereign nations, and occasionally face military opposition, but most of the time the various countries grudgingly allow them to operate. Given the delicate nature of these retrieval operations, the Tribunal has given some thought in recent months to hiring smaller, more precise teams than mercenaries—such as skilled adventuring parties.

Officially, anyone can travel to the Hall of Judgment, seek an audience with the court, and levy charges against someone for war crimes. On a practical level, however, the Tribunal rarely has time to listen to anyone who doesn't arrive with official government, house, or church backing. Even when it does, the only result is a writ of accusation; the Tribunal has never sent a retrieval team out based on charges brought by a civilian.

THE HALL OF JUDGMENT

Recently refurbished from a mothballed area of Thronehold Castle, the Hall of Judgment is the seat of power and authority—such as it is—for the Tribunal. The first floor consists of several audience chambers, dining rooms, kitchens, shrines to the Silver Flame and the Sovereign Host, and the Tribunal's sizable store of records and texts. Living chambers for the magistrates, their staff, and the hall's soldiers occupy the second floor, while the courtroom fills the top of the complex. Most war criminals sentenced by the Tribunal are shipped to Dreadhold or other prisons, but the basement of the hall holds its own cells, either for prisoners awaiting sentence or transport or for those the Tribunal wants to keep on hand (perhaps as witnesses in future trials). The underground also includes the court's vaults, where it stores evidence, monies, and emergency supplies, and maintains a hidden escape route in case of long-term siege.

Every room of the hall is warded against scrying and teleportation, and the courtroom itself can be shifted to become its own pocket dimension, not unlike a larger version of *rope trick.*

VALIN FIELD

In the southwest of Thrane, on the shores of Lake Brey, crouches a squalid, lonely village called Valiron. Standing as it does on the main highway, one might expect it to grow into a thriving community of trade and travel.

It has not, and likely never will. For Valiron stands not only in the shadow of the great Landrise Ridge but also in the shadow of a profanity conducted in the name of all that is good and holy. It stands at the edge of Valin Field, one of the most vile and bloody battlefields of the early Last War. Here a thousand innocents died by holy fire; here the earth drank blood and madness in equal measure. And here the skin of Eberron has broken, bleeding pain and horror from sources never meant to touch the world of mortals.

VALIN FIELD AT WAR

In 895, the Thrane border stood some miles farther north-northeast than it does today. The territories below the Landrise belonged to Breland, including a thriving town called Valin. There was nothing particularly special about the land on which Valin stood; it was fertile, but not unusually rich. The fishing on nearby Lake Brey was sufficient to provide sustenance, but not profit.

No, the land had but one distinction, and its inhabitants weren't even aware of it. It had once been the ancestral estate of the family Kemman, one of Breland's nobility. Not many years after the formation of Galifar, however, the entire family was disgraced when several of its members were caught agitating for Breland to declare independence from the relatively youthful kingdom. The entire family was stripped of lands and title and exiled.

All this would have been lost to history, too unimportant even to qualify as a footnote, except that the family passed its sense of resentment and entitlement down through the generations, building upon grandparents' tales until the Kemmans had cast themselves as the innocent victims of a brutal regime.

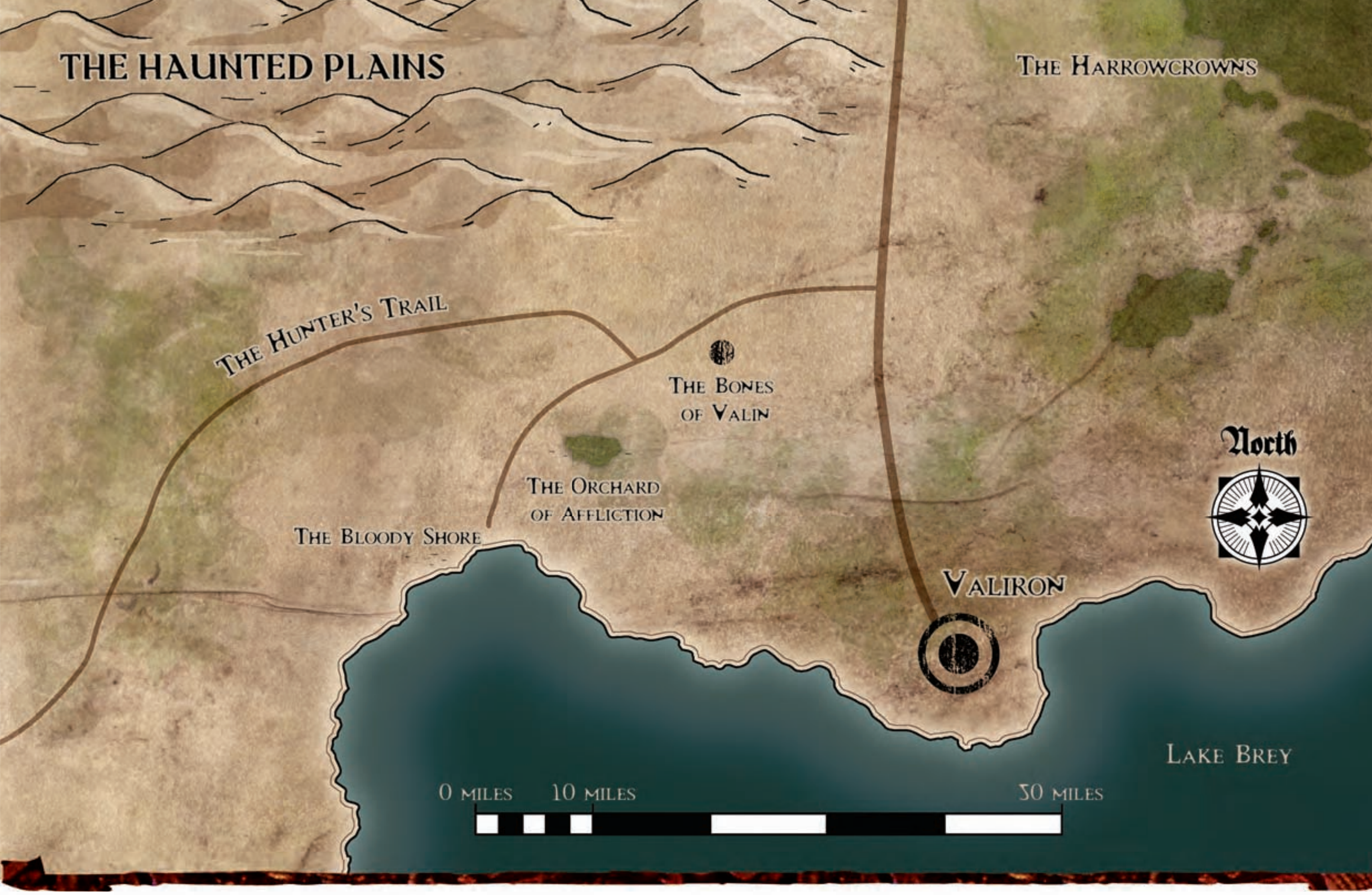
When the alliance between Thrane and Breland disintegrated around 910, and Thrane laid claim to much of northern Breland, it was Lord Vladimar Kronen, direct descendant of the exiled Kemmans, who commanded the invading forces.

Kronen had long been a devoted, if unyielding, servant of the Silver Flame—or so he believed. His ambition, his innate cruelty, and his lust for power had long since left him open to the Shadow in the Flame, the demon imprisoned within the Silver Flame itself. Ambition built upon pride, pride built upon cruelty, and the demon's whispers built upon it all. Though lucid, Lord Kronen was insane by the time he was ordered to take Brelish lands—lands that included his ancestral holdings. Kronen took this edict as a sign from the Silver Flame itself.

NIGHT AND BLOOD

The entirety of Valin Field has become a manifest zone connected to both Shavarath, the Battlefield, and Mabar, the Endless Night. This turn of events has a number of game effects.

- A character who casts a spell here that deals hit point damage or one that is associated with negative energy does so with a +1 bonus to caster level. (If both conditions apply, a +2 bonus is added to caster level.) A character who casts a spell of the healing subtype or one associated with positive energy does so with a –2 penalty to caster level.
- Any confirmed critical hit deals a number of points of Constitution damage equal to the weapon's critical multiplier –1. (For instance, a critical hit with a battleaxe deals 2 points of Constitution damage, because its critical multiplier is ×3.)
- Any living creature that dies by violence or disease in Valin Field has a 5% chance of rising as an undead on the second nightfall after its death, unless it is removed from the area. Sentient beings rise as ghouls or ghosts, while nonsentient beings become zombies or ghost brutes (*Libris Mortis* 101).
- All animals and vermin native to the region are hostile to intruders. They are treated as chaotic evil, despite their lack of intelligence, and attack travelers on sight.
- If you are using *Heroes of Horror*, the region is tainted. Characters suffer 1 point of both corruption and depravity upon entering Valin Field, and another 1 point for every continuous 24 hours they remain within. A successful DC 22 save (Fortitude for corruption, Will for depravity) negates the effect on any given day.



The citizens of Valin never stood a chance. Their few defenders were swiftly overrun by the Knights of Thrane, and those who died by the sword or the lance were the fortunate ones. At Kronen's orders, the survivors were rounded up, impaled, and burned, their bodies scattered across the surrounding fields in symbols of great occult significance that Kronen believed were honoring the Silver Flame. Ash and boiling blood spilled over the fields; screams drowned out the crackling of flames and the shrieks of crows in the sky, come to feast on the body.

Legends disagree on the reason for what happened next. Did the ghosts of the dying call down vengeance on their attackers? Did the land itself rebel against the horrors committed upon it? Did the Silver Flame punish those who committed such atrocities in its name? Whatever the cause, the carrion birds and scavengers—crows and vultures, dogs and wolves—turned talons and jaws not upon the bodies, but upon the soldiers of Thrane. To the last individual, everyone who followed Kronen's mad orders was ripped apart and consumed. Of Kronen himself, no trace was found, except for his emblem of the Silver Flame, scored and defaced by the raking of a thousand claws.

VALIN FIELD TODAY

The land around the murdered town of Valin has yet to recover. It is a field of horror and nightmare, as though the agony of the dead has seeped into the bones of Eberron itself.

Despite the legends that swiftly spread regarding the hazards of the region, it seemed a magnet for conflict. Multiple battles were waged across this field, usually between Thrane and Breland, but sometimes involving Aundair. Every soldier in those battles seemed driven, gripped in a fever of bloodlust, and few soldiers survived these encounters. Today, few areas other than the Mournland itself can match the reputation for the horrific that clings to Valin Field. Its presence is a constant embarrassment to Thrane, which has made numerous attempts to cleanse the region without success. The village of Valiron, which contains descendants of those few citizens of Valin who escaped Kronen's purge, keeps a constant wary eye on the field at all times.

Except where noted, the entirety of Valin Field is considered to be covered in light undergrowth (*DMG* 87).

Appropriate encounters for Valin Field include predatory and scavenging animals (normal and dire), vermin (normal and giant), deathshriekers$^{\text{MM3}}$, ghasts, ghosts, ghouls, living spells (primarily evocation and necromancy), ragewalkers$^{\text{MM3}}$, skeletons, spectres, swarms, wraiths, zombies, and even Lord Vladimar Kronen himself (CE male ghoul [formerly human] fighter 5/cleric [Shadow in the Flame] 4).

The Bloody Shore

Although Lake Brey is normal everywhere else, a haven for fishermen and boaters, the water turns dark where it nears Valin Field. The tide and the waves leave a bloody stain where they wash over the shore. Plants rot and fish lie dying. Anyone who comes into contact with the water in this location for more than 1 round risks contracting ghoul fever (*MM* 118), just as if he or she had been injured by a ghoul. Anyone who eats a plant or animal from this portion of the lake contracts ghoul fever with no save allowed. Even the nighttime vapors of the shore are dangerous; anyone who spends a full night within 100 feet of the shore takes 1d4 points of Wisdom damage (Fortitude DC 14 negates).

The Bones of Valin

These burned-out husks and timbers are all that remain of the once-proud town of Valin. Though the wood is blackened and almost a hundred years old, it is still painfully hot to the touch (dealing 1 hit point of fire damage per round of contact). Characters within the ruins can still hear the weeping and screaming of the town's citizens, a cacophony that bestows a –10 penalty on Listen checks and a –4 penalty on Concentration checks. Wraiths, spectres, and other incorporeal undead haunt the Bones of Valin.

The Hunter's Trail

This faint trail was once a hunters' path, used to stalk deer and other game. Today, those who would make use of the trail are themselves the hunted. Animals congregate on the trail when humanoids are in the region, launching attack after attack no matter how suicidal. Ghosts sometimes line the road as well, watching for passersby. The road is considered clear and flat terrain for movement purposes.

The Orchard of Affliction

This seemingly random scattering of stakes represents the final fate of most of Valin's citizens. If viewed from above, the pattern resembles several demonic symbols, though they are clearly incomplete. (Not all of Kronen's works survived the years.) Anyone present can hear the shrieks of the dying and the crackling of the flames (as with the Bones of Valin, above). The grasses here grow abnormally tall, and attempt to grapple anyone who passes through, as if with a life of their own. (Treat as a constant *Evard's black tentacles* with a caster level of 8th.) If a tentacle maintains a grapple for 2 consecutive rounds, it impales its victim on the nearest stake in the following round. This attack deals 3d10 points of damage, and the victim must make a successful DC 22 Strength check to haul himself off the stake.

WARFORGED

Thanks to endless lurid depictions of blood-spattered warforged soldiers on tireless marches to new battlefields splashed on the front pages of the wartime chronicles, the warforged have come to symbolize the worst aspects of the Last War in the minds of most of Khorvaire's population. Born from the paranoia of a dying king and the ingenuity of House Cannith, the warforged are the ultimate soldiers: living constructs made for war.

ORIGINS

Before his death, King Jarot commanded House Cannith to build mechanical warriors. Few of these soldiers were made, and they were far from living constructs—they possessed no capacity for independent thought. They were human-sized and human-shaped automatons formed of wood, stone, and metal, and they waded into battle swinging the axe blades built onto the ends of their arms. Jarot intended these constructs to defend his kingdom against the external threats he imagined: swarming monsters from Xen'drik or insidious infiltration from Sarlona, perhaps a flight of dragons from Argonnessen or marching deathless legions of Aerenal.

Upon his death, of course, war broke out within his kingdom, not from outside it. The limited number of golem warriors he commissioned from House Cannith had been distributed among the armies of Galifar's constituent Five Nations, but few officers viewed them as capable of doing more than standing guard at vital locations. On the rare times when they were used in battlefield action, they proved relatively ineffective; human soldiers found them easy to evade or to trick into pits or other traps from which they were not intelligent enough to free themselves. Given their high cost, they were an exceedingly poor investment. The militaristic nation of Karrnath, proud of its human soldiers' prowess, forswore the use of mechanical soldiers early in the war, well before the first sentient warforged were created.

Despite this early failure, House Cannith felt that construct soldiers were a golden opportunity for enormous profits. The house conducted extensive research and experiments, trying to improve the design. It took decades, but in 959, the enormous warforged titans were the first partial success in that effort. The Cannith artificers found that the large scale of a titan made it easier to create articulated joint mechanisms and, internally, structures that facilitated sentient thought. Warforged titans are barely more intelligent than horses, but that glimmer of sentience, and their great size, made them reasonably useful on the battlefield. With that accomplishment behind him, Aarren d'Cannith was soon able to miniaturize the same structures, improving them as he went, and produce the first warforged with truly humanlike intelligence. He unveiled the first of his new creations in 965.

CONSTRUCTING AN ARMY

The techniques perfected by House Cannith resulted in a process for creating warforged soldiers that was remarkably cost-effective—at least when compared to the alternatives, such as golems or shield guardians, which cost a minimum of 10,000 gp to create. With a functioning and well-maintained creation forge, a Cannith artificer can craft a dozen warforged for a cost comparable to that of a single shield guardian. The process actually benefits from mass production—making a dozen warforged at once is cheaper than producing one at a time. Compared to the cost of feeding, armoring, and bunking a human soldier, spending between 5,000 and 6,000 gold pieces on a tireless, armor-plated soldier that needs no food and is immune to disease seemed like a very reasonable investment.

Nevertheless, warforged costs were great. One of House Cannith's goals was to create a soldier that the warring nations would be able to afford, and it was at least partially successful. The house offered early discounts and reduced prices for large orders, and emphasized the savings in food, lodging, and training that accompanied the purchase. Breland and Cyre were the first to commission large numbers of warforged, and they continued to use significant numbers of warforged troops for the remaining thirty years of the war. Aundair and Thrane were slower to adopt the technology, partly because they never lacked for citizen recruits devoted to their defense. Still, Aundair was the first nation to promote a warforged to a command position. Karrnath never used more than a few squads of warforged, preferring its living warriors or the far cheaper undead soldiers.

By the time the modern warforged were perfected, Breland, Cyre, and Thrane had instituted laws requiring military service from all of their able-bodied citizens, but these laws included the option of paying a substitute to serve in one's place. The warforged were ideally suited to serve as substitutes. For the price of a single warforged soldier, an entire family (all the children of a single female) was exempted from the compulsory service. This legal loophole increased orders, thereby lowering costs, and brought a greater number of warforged troops into service, thanks to many wealthy families seeking to protect their children.

WARFORGED AT WAR

For most of the thirty years they served in the Last War, warforged soldiers formed their own units, serving under human commanders. Their training was carried out in camps run by House Cannith, so their tactics and organization were fairly consistent, regardless of the nation they served. Of course, once the warforged were purchased and deployed, they often received additional training and developed distinct tactics of their own.

Even the rawest warforged deployed in battle is a trained fighter rather than a mere warrior, which helped to justify the expense of a construct soldier.

EL 7: The most common unit of warforged soldiers is a simple squad of eight, with a human commander (usually an experienced fighter) and occasionally a magewright or artificer to provide repairs for the warforged. These squads were integrated into regular platoons of living soldiers, although platoons and sometimes entire companies formed entirely of warforged (except for the commanders) could be found in some armies.

Sergeant: human fighter 3.
Repair Specialist: human magewright 2.
Warforged Soldiers (8): warforged fighter 1.

EL 10: Though far less intelligent than modern warforged, the enormous warforged titans have their uses in battle, and they were often deployed along with a slightly modified warforged squad to form a unit perfectly suited to breaking through enemy ranks and scattering their soldiers.

Senior Sergeant: human fighter 4.
Advanced Repair Specialist: human artificer 4.
Warforged Titan: ECS 302.
Warforged Soldiers (8): warforged fighter 1.

WARFORGED RIGHTS

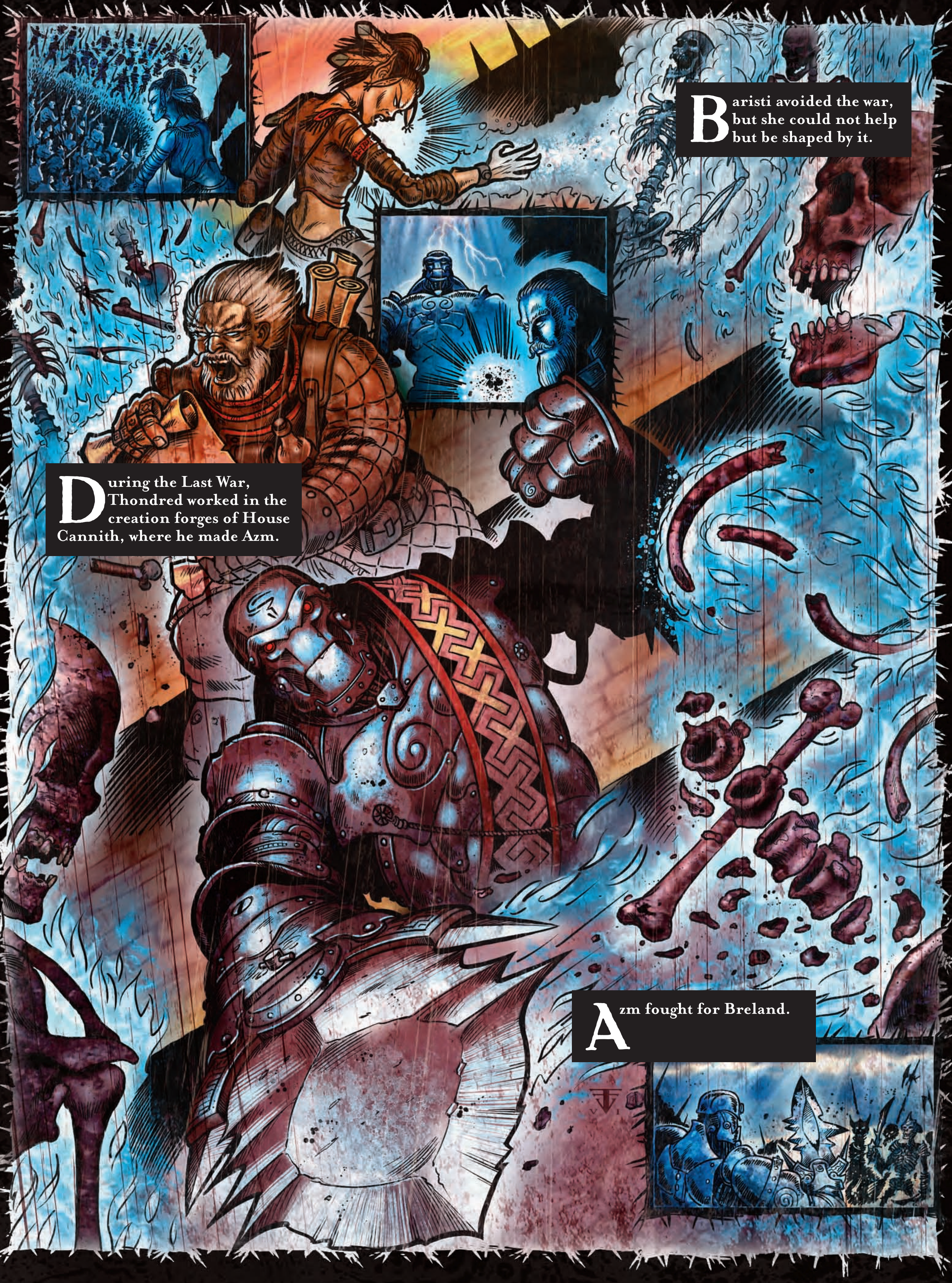
Warforged were built, bought, and trained for war, and it was natural that the people who invested so much time and money should feel a strong sense of ownership over the living constructs. The fact that warforged evolved slowly from the mindless constructs built before the war to the sentient race they are today also helps to explain why they were treated as property, little different from armor or weapons issued to soldiers or the siege engines those soldiers employed. Few people have trouble with the idea of a warforged titan being the property of the country that paid for its construction, but when the subject is a construct that seems human—that walks, talks, thinks, and apparently feels much like a person—the question of ownership becomes a sticky moral issue.

Philosophers, pacifists, activists, and soldiers started raising that moral issue almost as soon as the modern warforged started emerging from the creation forges. No one who shared a camp with a warforged soldier could avoid the realization that his construct comrade was a person who might deserve to be treated as such, rather than as property of the state or the army. It was likewise not long before generals came to realize that warforged were at least as competent in command positions as their human superiors. Most famously, in 981 the Aundairian general Argus ir'Bradden (LN male human fighter 9) promoted a warforged called Chase to replace the human Lord Major Derge ir'Lain (LN male human aristocrat 4/fighter 3), a cousin of Darro ir'Lain, the current Second Warlord of the Realm and commander of the Knights Arcane. Chase had consistently proven himself clever and resourceful, leading countless warforged assaults while waiting for human reinforcements to catch up with the tireless soldiers. When Derge arrived on the scene, he invariably fouled the situation up. When General Argus realized what was happening, he demoted Derge and gave Chase his command. The ousted Lord Major complained directly to the queen and was quickly reinstated.

Prejudice and misconceptions about the warforged were strong enough, even sixteen years after their introduction, that Queen Aurala showed no hesitation in accepting the word of a human commander over the claims of a warforged, even those supported by another human. However, General Argus convinced her to reconsider her position just a year later, and (to her enormous credit) she reversed her earlier decision, returning both Chase and Argus to their former commands. Beginning with that momentous decision, attitudes about the warforged shifted rapidly.

In 986, King Boranel of Breland convinced his nation's parliament to grant all the rights and privileges of citizenship to the warforged, recognizing their status as sentient beings worthy of freedom and respect. However, although the theoretical part of the proclamation was a powerful statement, the actual liberation of the warforged was contingent upon the end of the war—an event that was not even visible on the distant horizon at the time. Breland had recognized the warforged as people and promised them freedom, once they helped Breland win the war. The case has been made that the Warforged Decree was little more than a political move to make the warforged who were already fighting for Breland more loyal and even lure warforged from other armies to Breland's cause.

When negotiations for peace began at Thronehold, Boranel pushed as hard for the freedom of the warforged as he had ten years previously in his own parliament. Thrane in particular resisted their emancipation—that country had invested a great deal in its warforged soldiers and hoped to use them as labor for the massive task of rebuilding the nation. The discussions raged for two weeks, hanging up for some time on the question of whether warforged possess souls, but Boranel finally got his way, thanks to a great deal of back-room campaigning. With the signing of the Treaty of Thronehold, the warforged were recognized as free citizens of their nations. House Cannith was ordered to cease operating its creation forges so that no new warforged would be created, and the existing warforged were left to find their way in the new, postwar world.


Baristi avoided the war, but she could not help but be shaped by it.
During the Last War, Thondred worked in the creation forges of House Cannith, where he made Azm.
Azm fought for Breland.

CHAPTER THREE

HEROES OF THE LAST WAR

Practically every player character in an EBERRON campaign has been touched by the Last War in some way or another. The warforged are only the most obvious example of an entire set of game mechanics derived from events of the war. The *EBERRON Campaign Setting* encourages you to think about what your character did during the war. The feats, spells, prestige classes, and magic items your character uses might all be rooted in the war. This chapter expands those options.

This chapter also includes material with connections to other DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rulebooks, adding some distinctive EBERRON flavor to new game mechanics such as legacy items (from *Weapons of Legacy*) and teamwork benefits (from *Heroes of Battle* and *Player's Handbook II*). You'll also find a magic item set (a new concept introduced in *Magic Item Compendium*).

BACKGROUNDS

Player's Guide to Eberron introduces backgrounds designed to help build a character who feels like a part of Eberron. The additional backgrounds included here can help answer the question "What did your character do during the war?" Some of the options in that book are appropriate for characters who were active in the war: A chronicler might have been a war correspondent, a house scion might have been part of her house's war effort, and of course a war-torn hero must have served on some front or in some covert operation. This section gives some more nuanced options. Was your character an officer, a spy, or a pacifist deserter? Whether you're playing in a campaign set during the Last War or one dealing with its aftereffects, these backgrounds tie your character to the war.

DESERTER

"Well, ultimately I decided that the dream of a united Galifar wasn't worth dying for. It was never my dream."

—Ninety-Eight, warforged fighter

The Last War mobilized huge numbers of soldiers, which the nations hurled against each other in seemingly endless waves. By the end of the war, Breland, Cyre, and Thrane had passed laws requiring their able-bodied citizens to serve in the military. Sometimes, though, soldiers were less than willing to serve their country—because of pacifist principles, a rejection of the reasons for the war, simple conflict with a commanding officer, or sheer cowardice. You were one of those. For whatever reason, you decided that being a soldier was not your true calling, and you fled to some place where the law of your home country couldn't reach you—perhaps Throneport, Q'barra, or even distant Stormreach.

Adventuring: If fighting in the army wasn't for you, why are you out killing monsters? Most likely, you didn't leave the army out of some compunction against violence, but rather because you didn't believe in your nation's cause, or you fled an abusive or foolhardy superior officer. Adventuring suits you because it gives you a chance to associate with compatriots of your choosing, to fight for a cause you do believe in (even if that cause is just personal gain), and to keep out of reach of a legal system that would like to charge you with desertion. Adventuring might be a circumstance of your flight: If you left Khorvaire and took refuge in Stormreach, it would be hard to avoid adventure in that location. Or, combating monsters might be all you know how to do after a lifetime of military training.

Personality: Like many veterans, you're haunted by whatever it is that made you flee the army. Were you witness to one too many battlefields choked with corpses? Were you subjected to constant abuse, even torture, at the hands of your sergeant? Were you pushed into military service by the theocratic fanatics of Thrane, forced to serve a faith that wasn't your own? Or were you just outside Cyre on the Day of Mourning? Something bad must have happened to you to make you choose a life on the run in favor of a military career, and whatever it is stays with you.

Behavior: You're a criminal, though your principal crime was refusing to kill any more. You've spent years on the run, and you're accustomed to keeping a low profile, avoiding attention, and slipping away from trouble when it comes looking for you. You're constantly looking over your shoulder, afraid of what you might see there.

Language: How you speak might have a lot to do with how long you served in the army before you deserted. If you had a significant military career, you're likely to have adopted military jargon; if you were still a raw recruit at the time you fled, you use more civilian speech. Keep your voice quiet—you don't want to attract undue attention. And remember, there could always be someone listening, so don't talk much about your past.

Variants: You can come up with endless variations on this background based on why you deserted your unit. Maybe you are a pacifist—you might want to explore the Vow of Peace feat and the apostle of peace prestige class in

Book of Exalted Deeds. Maybe your sergeant was such a cruel taskmaster that you've sworn to hunt him down—and you've found that he's now a powerful villain.

ENLISTED SOLDIER

"For King and Country!"

—Corporal Alvos Dirrust, human fighter

Your nation needed you, and you were there. Bearing shield and spear, ensconced in ranks of like-minded individuals, you marched to the front lines, ready to face the enemy. You are no officer, no hero, but you did your duty, you fought for your nation, and you know that you have given it your all.

Adventuring: You are a soldier, pure and simple. Your service consisted primarily of patrols, hours or days of tense calm punctuated by swift bursts of combat, supplemented by battlefield encounters, surrounded by blood and carnage. On rare occasions, you might be assigned more specialized missions, such as infiltration or rescue, but these are more often left to operatives better trained for the task. If and when you leave government service, the general tenor of your adventures likely won't change, since your skills are still best suited to direct confrontation with a known enemy.

Personality: You could be gung-ho, eager to meet the enemy blade on blade, or you might be a reluctant soldier, inspired by a sense of duty rather than a desire for action. Whichever the case, you are loyal to your nation and to your commanders, and you know that you will do whatever must be done. You have grown skilled at causing violence, whether you love it or hate it, and you acknowledge it as a valuable talent.

Behavior: You are accustomed to knowing your place in things, whom you answer to and who answers to you, and you grow uncomfortable in circumstances without a clearly defined chain of command. You would rather let someone else work out the strategies and tactics and then simply explain your part in all of it, though you offer your opinion and insight if asked. You are swift to resort to violence to solve most problems, not necessarily out of bloodlust or temper, but because it is what you have grown accustomed to. Whatever you do, you do to protect your country.

Language: You're accustomed to keeping your opinions to yourself, offering them only if asked. Like the war-torn hero (*Player's Guide to Eberron* 13), your speech is riddled with military terminology. You don't scout, you "recon." You don't purchase supplies, you "requisition materiel."

Variants: You need not serve a nation to be a soldier. Various clans and holdings field their own militaries, and the differences between a tribal soldier and a national one are primarily cosmetic.

FOREIGN INFILTRATOR

"Of course I'm loyal to her majesty! You insult me by suggesting otherwise!"

—Lord Morgell (actually Thless),
human (actually changeling) aristocrat (actually bard)

None of the other spies of the Last War had a task half as difficult as yours, for you were a true infiltrator. You spent years, perhaps even decades, living in an enemy nation. You masqueraded as one of its citizens, worked your way into a position of knowledge or influence, all the while secretly reporting back to your true masters. It was a life fraught with danger and temptation, and it has marked you in ways you have yet to discover.

Adventuring: Your endeavors served a dual purpose. You constantly strove to prove yourself loyal to your "adopted" nation, outwardly seeking to strengthen it, to uncover magic that could help it, to thwart its foes. At the same time, you had to learn enough of its activities, and sabotage enough of its efforts, to ensure that, in the end, your work did more good for your true nation than this one. You might still be doing just that, for although the war has officially ended, espionage is as prevalent as ever. It can become confusing, this constant set of double objectives, all overlaid with the constant risk of being discovered.

Personality: Deception is as natural to you as breathing. Not only your goals, but your very life, rely on your ability to mislead everyone you encounter. You no longer decide whether to lie, but simply what lies to tell, and you expect no less from others. You are all but incapable of believing anything you are told, trusting anyone you meet, or accepting anything you see at face value.

Behavior: Act friendly and loyal to your companions and your adopted nation, no matter what your ulterior motives. You lie constantly and consistently, never letting anyone near the truth of who you are and how you feel. You are not careless with your deceptions, since you cannot afford to be caught in a lie, but you have buried the truth so deep that it never even occurs to you to speak it.

Language: Any speech patterns you might once have had are long purged. You speak now in whatever way is most appropriate for your assumed position. If you masquerade as a lord, your speech is formal, educated, even stilted. If you have taken the place of a merchant, you are everyone's friend, constantly trying to entice people into a deal or a sale.

Variants: Infiltrating a guild, a mercenary company, or even a dragonmarked house can be just as dangerous as spying within an army. Few people are hated so much as double agents, but in war, few are more valuable.

MATERIEL SUPPLIER

"Now, hold on. I said it would be difficult to get that many. I never said I couldn't provide them."

—Saral Vroldam, dwarf artificer

Governments need crafters and casters to provide equipment for their armies. Mercenaries call for large numbers of weapons. Dragonmarked houses must supply their guards and sell their creations to the warring governments. All of these agencies require someone who can make it happen. That's you. Black market, legitimate, or both; smuggler, merchant, financier, arms dealer. You didn't fight in the Last War, you just enabled everyone else to do so.

Adventuring: Although you rarely set foot on the front lines, your activities during the war were no less hazardous than those of the soldiers. You transported large quantities of weapons and supplies across the continent, sometimes through territories held by forces that would be just as happy to take them from you without paying. You had to acquire those weapons (or at least the material and the XP to make them yourself), and do so cheaply enough to turn a profit by selling them. This led you to do favors for governments so they'd sell you surplus goods for low prices (on those rare occasions when anyone had such a surplus)—to delve ancient ruins in search of old magic, or even to scavenge battlefields. Sometimes you had to compete for a client, proving the quality of your supplies by showing them in use. As nations gear up for a potential second conflict, looking over their borders with fear and suspicion, your business has not suffered from the end of the war; if anything, it has improved.

Personality: You're always looking for the next deal, the next opportunity. You measure people by their value to you: What can they provide, how can they help, how can you profit? This doesn't mean you are heartless or bitter, nor does it mean you have no true friends or loyalties. It just means that, at least initially, value is your primary standard of measure. You appear friendly and open, though you might take pains to keep most of your true self hidden. Although you are not necessarily amoral, business always comes first.

Behavior: You're a paradox. One moment you're urbane and charming, making deals with the wealthy and powerful. The next you're cold and ruthless, stripping goods off dead soldiers or mercilessly stepping over anyone who gets in your way. Dealing arms and supplying materiel is a dangerous business. You can't afford to anger your clients unnecessarily, but neither can you afford to appear weak, or to turn down any chance to acquire salable goods, no matter how distasteful the methods.

Language: You choose your words carefully. Whether flattering a potential client, wheeling and dealing with a supplier, or fast-talking a border guard, you have to be precise. You use the truth and lies in equal measure. What matters more is your tone, and that you not let slip anything that could hurt you down the road.

Variants: Although the above characterization assumes that you are dealing in military-grade goods—arms, magic items, dragonshards—you could just as easily be a merchant who deals in other commodities. You might be selling horses and other beasts (perhaps for House Vadalis), dealing and transporting art, or moving food from region to region. At various times and places in the war, all of these kinds of merchandise are valuable enough to make your task a dangerous one.

MERCENARY

"Remind his Grace that the deal said payment was due immediately, not at his convenience. And remind him that we just beat the hell out of an enemy he couldn't touch, so maybe we're not the people he wants to irritate."

—Halvar "Shield-Breaker" Blylock,
Captain of the Five Spears Company,
human duskblade

For you, the war was never about patriotism or a higher calling; it was a job, pure and simple. You were on the front lines as often as any soldiers, but for different reasons. Let them fight for king, country, god, even honor and glory. You fought for cold, hard coin. You might come from a region that has no direct stake in the war, such as the Lhazaar Principalities, or perhaps money is simply more important to you than any other motivation.

Adventuring: You'll do just about anything combat-related, if the price is right. That's a good thing, too, since you're asked to do just about anything at times. As a mercenary, you don't have the luxury of specialization to the degree that enlisted soldiers do. You're the front-line fighter, the infiltration specialist, and the siege engineer—or at least, you'd better be able to provide those who are. Most of your adventures are fairly straightforward combats, but you might be tasked to locate, retrieve, or destroy a specific objective. Because you have worked for multiple nations and factions, you've faced a wider variety of challenges than soldiers who serve a single cause.

Personality: You might not particularly enjoy violence (then again, you might), but you're certainly inured to it, to say nothing of good at it. You never hesitate to fight when there's reason, but you're not quick to lift a blade or a fist without need. It does you no good to risk injury or death when you're not being paid to do so. Others might view your attitude toward bloodshed as cold, but you know it's just practical. Fighting for some nebulous cause or morality is wasteful. And as far as killing for money, well . . . if your opponent wasn't willing to risk death, she shouldn't have picked up her sword in the first place.

Behavior: If you're on a job, give it your all. If not, work on finding the next one. You'll fight fiercely enough for a reward, but you prefer to avoid bloodshed when one is not at stake—unless your life or the lives of your friends are endangered. You tend to divide people, at least until you get to know them, into three groups: potential clients or allies, potential foes, and everyone else.

Language: Your speech is a bit coarse and gruff. You've seen too much combat and death to waste time with niceties, unless you're trying to negotiate a contract. You prefer to be blunt, to speak your mind, and let others take offense if they wish.

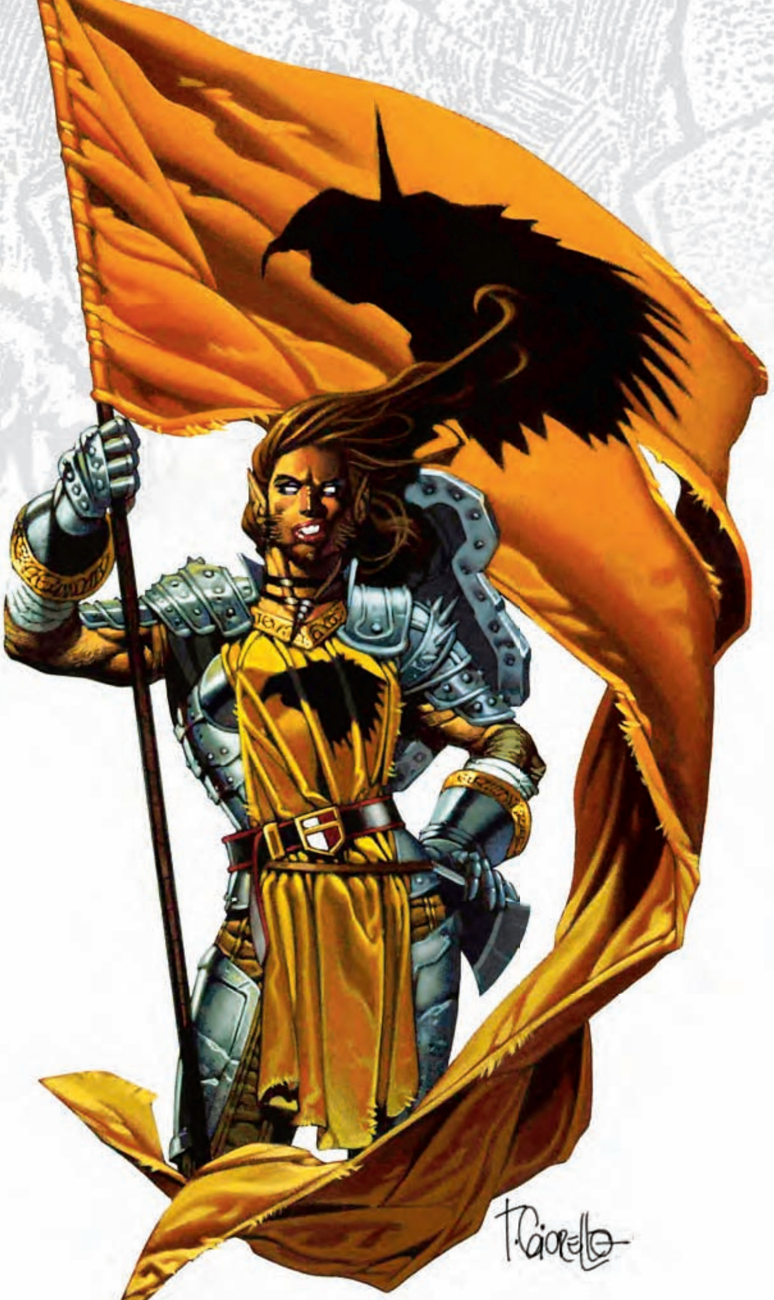
Variants: Mercenaries are not limited to battlefield or military endeavors. You could just as easily be a hired caravan guard, a bouncer, a thieves' guild leg-breaker, or even a thief-taker on the highways.

RANKING OFFICER

"Inform the commanders I want two regiments in the southern fields by midday. And, Private, if I catch you with a weapon that filthy again, I'll have you horsewhipped."

—Colonel Azla Bvar, shifter knight

Whether due to noble birth or a long and successful career working your way up through the ranks, you've reached the upper echelons of your nation's military. No simple soldier on the front line, you make tactical decisions and give orders that dozens or hundreds of warriors follow—and that could mean life or death, not only for them but for the citizens of your country.



Like Colonel Bvar, perhaps you were a high-ranking officer in the armies of the Last War

Adventuring: You have no time for personal endeavors; everything you do is motivated by the execution of your duty. You might lead a thousand soldiers in a cavalry charge across a battlefield, or half a dozen special operatives in a raid on an enemy weapons cache. Of equal import, however, are the political battles you must fight. The nobles and politicians back home don't understand the details or the hardships of the front lines, and many of your fellow officers place their own ambition and advancement ahead of the nation's well-being. When you aren't watching the enemy try to hack your soldiers to bits, you're struggling to keep your "allies" from doing essentially the same thing.

Personality: You are serious, perhaps even dour. It's not that you don't have a sense of humor; you just rarely have time to exercise it. You are accustomed to taking charge, and you react poorly to those who refuse to obey, but you also feel a strong sense of obligation to those who fight under you. Everything must be in its place, and you prefer to have contingency plans for any eventuality.

Behavior: Give orders, concoct strategies. You insist that everything be planned out, not to the point of ridiculousness, but enough so that nothing foolish is left to chance. Your strong sense of duty comes out in everything you do. Keep yourself and your allies task-focused, and measure very endeavor by how effectively it aids your nation's war effort. You are quick to criticize a mistake or a poor effort, but also readily offer praise for demonstrations of initiative and a job well done.

Language: You speak like a soldier, but more formally and forcefully. You frequently bark orders and seem to be shouting, in part because you're accustomed to making yourself heard over the din of a training field or a battle. You tend to speak of a situation in military terms, referring to potential bottlenecks and ambush spots, vantage points, and the like.

Variants: Just as a soldier need not serve a nation, so you need not command regular forces. You might lead the soldiers of a house, the private army of a noble family, the knights of a church, or a large mercenary company.

REFUGEE

"Back then, I had a cause I believed in, I had a country, and I had three friends I could trust with my life. Since then, all of that has changed."

—Captain Daine of Cyre

The Last War wreaked havoc on the nations and people of Khorvaire. The desolation of Cyre is only the most obvious example of the destruction and displacement of Khorvaire's peoples. All across Khorvaire, villages were uprooted as great armies marched through and laid waste. Your home was a casualty of the war—as were your family, many of your friends, and your innocence.

Adventuring: Perhaps you turned to a life of adventuring because it seemed a better alternative than being herded into the High Walls refugee district of Sharn or taking up residence in New Cyre. Maybe you went to High Walls and found yourself thrust into a life of urban adventure. Or you might have been an adventurer before the destruction of your homeland—and your wandering was the only thing that saved you from suffering the fate of your home. In any case, you have no roots, nothing to keep you from roaming the world in search of adventure, fortune, or a new place to call home.

Personality: Hope is not one of your virtues. Some would call you grim, or pessimistic, or overly negative—you'd say realistic. You're always aware of the worst possibilities in every situation, not because you're convinced they'll occur, but because you want to be prepared for anything. The memory of what you've lost is always with you, so you avoid creating new attachments to things or people you could later lose. Better to remain separate and unattached than to again suffer the devastation you experienced when you returned to your home and found it destroyed.

Behavior: You sometimes verge on being listless. You sleep late, partly because of the nightmares that wake you in the darkest hours of night. When your party calls a halt, you throw yourself down and stare at the ground until it's time to move again. You're sometimes distracted, remembering a better past, unable to imagine a better future and reluctant to hope for one.

Language: Your speech is that of your home—probably a small, rural community. You don't use fancy words or complex sentences. You're prone to short sentences, speaking as little as possible. Though your mind is often on the past, you don't like to talk about what you've lost.

Variants: There might be a mystery surrounding the fate of your home—the nature of the Day of Mourning is the most obvious example. Some refugees are driven to discover what happened—was your village massacred in a war crime, swallowed up in a planar breach created by an *eldritch machine,* or simply abandoned ahead of an advancing army? Might your family and friends still be alive somewhere? Finding them could be your top priority—or your worst nightmare.

SPECIAL OPERATIVE

"Step aside, son. You haven't been trained for this."

—Father Archimedes d'Vult,
human cleric of the Sovereign Host

You are one of the elite few, a member of one of the specially skilled groups employed throughout the war. You are, in essence, an adventurer for a cause. Whenever an objective is too difficult, too specialized, or simply too bizarre for traditional soldiers, you're ready to step up. Of all the wartime backgrounds, this is the one that most closely resembles "traditional" adventuring.

Adventuring: Your missions include almost anything imaginable. Infiltrate a heavily guarded enemy stronghold to steal the plans for a new Cannith-developed weapon. Delve into the depths of an ancient draconic ruin to retrieve a powerful artifact before enemy soldiers—already there ahead of you—do the same. Slay another nation's champion, who has already killed many of your own soldiers and whose mere presence erodes morale. Rescue a captured noble from the deepest dungeons of a rival. Prevent a cult of Khyber from using the bloodshed on a battlefield as the final element of a potent summoning ritual. Essentially, if your nation needs it done, and your average soldier on the field can't accomplish it, the job falls to you.

Personality: More than fearless, you're drawn to risk and danger. Loyal to your nation, you take on tasks at which other patriots balk. You are proud of what you do and of the fact that few others can do it. You get bored easily and are always looking for the next adventure.

Behavior: You often seem reckless to others, diving headlong into danger. You appear flighty as well, flitting from one bizarre activity or objective to the next. In truth, you're neither. Make a point of learning everything you can about the dangers you face, and don't be afraid of executing a strategic withdrawal when necessary. Still, you're constantly agitating for your companions to move forward, to take on new challenges. Between adventures, you are bored and listless, showing little interest in the mundane details of life.

Language: You've become accustomed to speaking fast and concisely, trying to convey the maximum information in the minimum time. You toss around a great many magical terms and monster names, and it often befuddles you for an instant when you are reminded that not everyone is familiar with those terms, or has the knowledge and experience that you have.

Variants: You certainly need not serve a nation to be an adventurer during the war. You might work for some other group—guild, house, or church—or you could be entirely freelance. Treasure hunters made more than a few gold pieces during the war, digging up ancient magic and selling it to the highest bidder.

SURVIVALIST

"You do what you want. But don't come crying to me for food and shelter when your precious nation's nothing but a broken waste."

—Rhulal, half-orc ranger

You had no interest in winning the Last War; you just wanted to survive it. Convinced that civilization would not last, you took to the outskirts and the wilds, stockpiling supplies and weapons, prepared to endure and even thrive in the chaos and anarchy to come. Your opinion hasn't changed much since Thronehold; as far as you're concerned, the treaty is a delay, not a reprieve.

Adventuring: Most of your adventures are defensive in nature, or at least preemptive. You seek to acquire the necessary goods to survive after civilization falls. These could include magic items related to healing and the creation of food, weapons capable of warding off raiders and monsters, and even some luxuries—after all, there's no sense in living in squalor and discomfort if you don't need to. When possible, you make every effort to wipe out dangerous creatures and rivals in the area you've chosen as your home. You might embark on more general adventures to secure allies who can stand by you after the world ends, or at least to acquire riches to buy what you need while there's still time.

Personality: You are bitter and cynical. You truly believe that nothing can be done to prevent civilization from collapsing. The best you can hope for is to survive, and maybe last long enough to see something better rise up in its place. You scoff at those who fight for a cause, though a small part of you envies them their belief. You'll take almost any risk if it means giving yourself an advantage down the road, or to protect what few friends you have, but you are unlikely to put yourself in harm's way for any other reason.

Behavior: Always push for the most reward for the least risk; you aren't a coward, you're just practical. Assume the worst about any news or any situation, and prepare for the worst of anything to come. You are often serious, even morose.

Language: Use military terminology, even if you were never a soldier, because you think of yourself as one. If you didn't serve in the military, use some of the terminology incorrectly.

Variants: You might be trying to survive something less consequential than the end of civilization. You could dwell in an area overrun by monsters, or even on the outskirts of the Mournland. Alternatively, you might not be gathering supplies for yourself, but to protect loved ones who would be ill equipped to manage if war broke out once more.

SCARS OF WAR

The Last War left many marks on the face of Khorvaire, from the gaping wound of the Mournland to the new borders carved into the political landscape. Of far more immediate import to most, however, are the scars it left on those who fought during the seemingly endless conflict.

Presented here is an array of lingering injuries—physical, mental, and emotional—you can apply to more fully convey the war's impact on your character. Note that these are entirely role-playing hints and suggestions, not mechanical alterations. If you want your character's physical or mental nature to reflect these scars, that's a laudable goal, and there are plenty of ways to do so. You might choose to give a character with a limp a relatively low Dexterity. A disfigured character might have a low Charisma. If your DM makes use of such systems, consider choosing some appropriate flaws, as presented in *Unearthed Arcana.* Ultimately, however, any such mechanical details are up to you; the scars presented here do not automatically impose them.

Don't take these personality quirks too far. They're intended to add to the roleplaying experience, not to provide an excuse to irritate the other players at the table or to hog the spotlight. They're best used in moderation; think of them as spice to jazz up your character, not as a main course.

ADDICTION

You are addicted to some substance. The most common is alcohol in its various forms, but Khorvaire provides plenty of other possibilities for those who seek to wash away their pain with outside help. From the *kvinta* herb found exclusively on the plains of Talenta; to the excretions of the izmbi, a gecko native to Zilargo's jungles; to numerous synthetic mood-shifters created by enterprising alchemists, you have your pick of poisons.

Roleplaying: Get jittery when it looks as though you might run low on your substance of choice. Speak swiftly and grow angry easily when you've gone without; calm down dramatically when you finally get what you need. Obsess over your supply of "stuff," constantly worrying that you won't be able to keep yourself stocked. You grow angry when confronted with your problem but, on rare occasions you might have the self-awareness to seek out help—or at least to be repulsed by your own weakness.

BATTLE SCARS

The simplest and most common mark of the Last War is the battle scar. Such a blemish likely came from one of the weapons of war; an enemy soldier's attack, the fang or claw of a war-trained beast, or an offensive spell. Some soldiers have only one scar, perhaps a large white line down the torso where an axe punched through armor, criss-crossing lines on the arms from the tips of rapiers, or a mark from nose to ear marking the trail of an arrow. Others are literally covered with scars and old injuries, a veritable road map of violence and combat during the war.

Roleplaying: A fierce warrior might wear each of his scars as a badge of honor and glory. If possible, choose clothing and armor that exposes your most impressive scars. Any time the conversation turns to battle, tell tales of your prowess, showing your scars as evidence of your exploits. Alternatively, you might view your scars as shameful, perhaps seeing in each one a wound you should have avoided, a reminder of days you'd like to forget, or simply a blemish that impairs your physical appearance. In such a case, dress to hide your scars, perhaps even using makeup or magic to cover them, and grow irritated whenever someone draws attention to them.

BIGOTRY/PREJUDICE

Everyone needs an outlet for anger, and rage is in no short supply during war. Whether because you faced enemies of a certain race or nationality, lost friends in a particular battle, or simply needed a scapegoat for your pain and helplessness you feel, you have developed a seething hatred for a particular people. You might automatically distrust anyone from Karrnath, or hate all elves, or harbor a resentment of wizards. Your bigotry could be even broader than that, targeting anyone who isn't from your own land or a member of your own race. Of all the scars of war described here, this is one of the most likely to earn you a vast array of enemies and cause you severe problems.

Roleplaying: You don't like, and don't trust, members of your hated group. At best, you ignore them when possible. More likely, you are actively rude and off-putting, perhaps even prone to violent outbursts. You have no interest in dealing with these people, negotiating with them, or cooperating with them; you'd rather see them all go away, or even all dead.

It cannot be stressed enough that in a game of heroism, as DUNGEONS & DRAGONS is normally played, this is not an appropriate attitude for a good-aligned character. It is presented here as a realistic and viable emotional consequence of the war, but you should be careful when selecting it for your character. Don't use it as an excuse to get the party into trouble or to fight with other PCs, unless everyone else at the table is comfortable with such situations. Be prepared for the DM to throw additional difficulties in your path—your attitude makes new enemies faster than you can deal with those you already have.

BLOOD-THIRST

You aren't just good at killing, you're all but addicted to it. Maybe it was the only way your mind could survive the horrors of war, or maybe you joined the fight due to your love of carnage. Whatever the case, you are only at home when taking the life of an enemy. So far, your need to kill hasn't overwhelmed you. You probably aren't a criminal, and you don't kill random passersby on the street. You've been able to keep your bloodlust focused where it belongs: on the field of battle and in the depths of dungeons.

Roleplaying: You are swift to initiate combat, and prefer violent resolution to negotiation or compromise. You aren't incapable of talking things over, but you do so only when circumstances offer no other option. You do not show mercy, and you could care less about honor on the battlefield; when you fight, you fight to kill, no matter what it takes. Reject any tactical plan that puts you in a support position. You want to be in the thick of things; let others hang back to heal or provide boosting spells.

COLD

You have dealt with the pain and horror of war by shutting down your emotions. You sometimes seem less human than even the warforged, refusing to show any sign of joy, sadness, love, or hatred. You might not feel these emotions at all or, more likely, you've bottled them up so tightly that you couldn't easily let them out now if you tried.

Roleplaying: Do not laugh. Do not cry. Do not express enthusiasm for anything. Every decision you make is based on what you view as cold, hard fact. You are unmoved by appeals to your pity or heroism, and even revenge doesn't drive you. Even when fighting alongside your allies or helping them out of trouble, you show no overt sign of affection for them.

COWARDICE

The pain of war is something to be avoided, no matter what. Though you fought well enough in the past, you have developed a fear of combat, and indeed of danger of any sort. So much death, so much suffering—why should you add your own to the list? So far, you've managed to work through your fear to do what must be done, but you fear it's only a matter of time before your cowardice paralyzes you entirely.

As a slight variant, consider having a revulsion to violence rather than more general cowardice. You are quite willing to face environmental hazards, traps, and similar dangers. It's only actual combat, the act of lifting a weapon and shedding another's blood, that gives you pause.

Roleplaying: Obviously your cowardice cannot be too severe, or else you couldn't be an adventurer. Still, you avoid combat as often as possible. Suggest plans and alternatives that forestall conflict, and stand by them no matter how ludicrous they might seem to others, or how much time or profit they might cost the party. You might even lie to your friends if it means avoiding a fight. Retreat if you've taken a moderate amount of damage, and focus on attacking from a distance, keeping yourself out of melee. Grow angry whenever anyone points out your cowardice, defending it as simple common sense.

DEPRESSION

Your spirit has been crushed beneath the weight of all you've seen and all you've done. You feel an undercurrent of sadness on even the most joyous occasions, and you can never seem to work up any true motivation for action. You continue with your life, adventuring with your companions or doing your duty, but it's purely a matter of routine. Happiness and enthusiasm seem permanently beyond your reach.

Roleplaying: Show no initiative or enthusiasm for anything. When you accompany your allies, it's because you've been dragged along, or because you know you'll feel even worse if they go off without you. Remain largely silent except to criticize plans and performance—both yours and those of others.

FLASHBACKS

So traumatized were you by certain events of the war that you find yourself back there, at least for a few moments, on a regular basis. These flashbacks might be triggered by stress, particularly when you find yourself in a combat situation that resembles those of the war, but it might simply hit you at random intervals. You can tell when you're having a flashback, and part of you knows that what you see and hear aren't real, but you cannot help reacting to these stimuli anyway.

Roleplaying: Grow strangely frantic in combat. In minor battles, react as though the danger were greater than it is. Call out to allies who aren't present, and refer to the enemies by other names, such as claiming that a group of goblin bandits are a phalanx of Karrnathi cavalry. On occasion, make blatantly improper tactical decisions based on the battle you remember, rather than the one raging now. Decide ahead of time what battle (or battles) you flash back to, and keep the details consistent each time you reference those events.

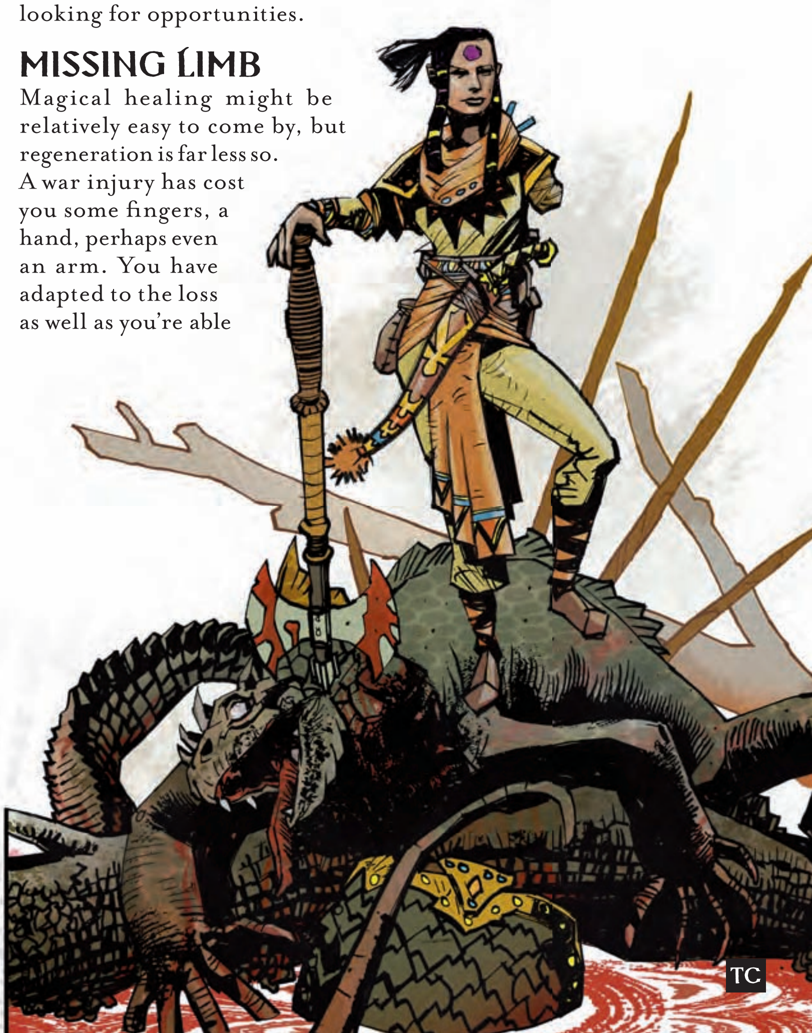
LIMP

An injury to one of your legs, or possibly your back, never quite healed properly. Although you are at full health, you walk with a stiff and uneven gait. Perhaps magic has been unable to fix the problem, or you might simply be unwilling to try, fearing that you would have to allow yourself to be reinjured in order to give the healing a better chance of working. The limp might or might not have a strong impact on your speed and dexterity, but it's quite noticeable regardless.

Roleplaying: Even if you've chosen not to match your character's abilities and skills to the limp, remember that your character might not be as certain of her capabilities as you are. Avoid situations that seem likely to require sprinting or jumping, since you aren't confident in your ability to succeed. You might also feel awkward in social situations, particularly if dancing or games are involved. You prefer to ride rather than walk, even for relatively short distances. In combat, choose a good tactical position and stay there until circumstances require you to move, rather than dashing around the battlefield looking for opportunities.

MISSING LIMB

Magical healing might be relatively easy to come by, but regeneration is far less so. A war injury has cost you some fingers, a hand, perhaps even an arm. You have adapted to the loss as well as you're able



Many warriors lost limbs in the Last War; woe to those who assume they can no longer fight to, but it still causes you more than a few problems. You've contemplated magical regeneration, or perhaps some sort of graft, but so far you've failed to find sufficient funds, or at least the proper opportunity to do so.

Roleplaying: This is one of the more difficult scars of war to convey without incorporating game mechanics, but there are still things you can do to get it across. Most obviously, avoid the use of anything that requires, or even encourages, the use of two hands. This includes, but isn't limited to, two-handed melee weapons, bows, shields (unless you're using the shield as a weapon), and the like. Try to avoid activities such as climbing or swimming. When acting in character, avoid using the "missing" limb to make gestures; that's a subtle act, but it'll help get the point across to your fellow players.

MOOD SWINGS

Being constantly on edge during the war has made you emotionally jumpy, easily swayed, and unpredictable. You react oddly to stimuli, either with excessive emotion, or rapidly cycling from one emotional extreme to the other. Although you're fully functional, it's difficult for you to hide the fact that there's something wrong under the surface.

Roleplaying: All your reactions are extreme. Things aren't just funny, they're hysterical; not just sad, but heartbreaking; not just creepy, but terrifying. Change swiftly from one emotion to another, going from laughing to morose and withdrawn, or from terrified to calm, in the blink of an eye.

MOURNLAND SCARS

Even in a world where magic is common, some things are simply unnatural—and that now includes you. Perhaps you were caught in the outskirts of the Mourning, or you might have been twisted by the blasted lands during later exploration. Whatever the case, you have now been scarred, mutilated, or mutated by the unknowable mystical forces that curse the former Cyran lands. The precise nature of these marks varies greatly, but can include twisted and discolored limbs, patches of blatantly dead (or undead) flesh, body parts that appear to belong on some other creature, and even odder alterations.

Roleplaying: Make every effort to hide your deformity. You might not be ashamed of it per se, but you know it marks you as unnatural. It might even cause others, terrified of the taint of the Mournland, to refuse to associate with you or even to attack you. You are edgy around powerful spellcasters, for fear of being twisted even further, but you secretly hope someone can someday find a way to make yourself whole again. Grow angry at anyone who draws attention to your deformity, and when possible, lie about its source, claiming it is the result of a spell or some other "unnatural" effect.

OBSESSIVE COMPULSION

As a soldier in the war, you focused on the discipline of routine to distract your mind from the horrors around you, until you could no longer function without it. Today, this focus manifests as one or more compulsions that you must perform. Such a trait could be as minor as needing to polish your sword five or six times every evening or triple-checking your supplies before setting out on a journey. On the other hand, it might be far more complex, governing the exact order in which you conduct your daily activities or even the maneuvers you employ in combat.

Roleplaying: Determine your compulsions—or at least some of them—well in advance, to enable you to portray them properly. Obsess about them any time it's even remotely appropriate, delaying so you can go back and make sure you locked your trunk, or so you can count your spare arrows. Grow irritable and worried if you aren't given the opportunity to indulge your compulsion. Talk about it constantly, fretting and planning.

PARANOIA

One of the most common psychological afflictions of the Last War, this is simply the belief that all people—or at least a lot of people—are out to get you. Everything that goes wrong is the result of someone working against you, and every secret is rooted in a conspiracy. You are almost incapable of trusting others, except for your few friends, and you see danger in every shadow.

Roleplaying: Look around constantly, and jump at the slightest noise. Warn your companions of hazards that don't exist. Refuse to trust anyone, and assume everyone is part of some conspiracy against you. Blame this conspiracy, or some other enemy, for every little thing that goes wrong. Insist on "protective" details, such as sitting with your back to a wall in a tavern, or sleeping by the door in your room after putting pillows under the blankets on the bed, to thwart nighttime assassins.

PHOBIAS

A past trauma has bestowed a deep and abiding fear in you. This might be a fear of something that caused you to suffer during the war—fire, warforged, drowning—but this need not be the case. Your unease could be something associated with trauma but not responsible for it; for instance, if you saw many of your comrades' bodies rotting on the battlefield, you might develop a phobia about the flies or rats that scavenged their flesh.

Roleplaying: Avoid the object of your fear like the plague. Run away from it if possible, or at least refuse to draw near it. Grow shaky and stammer a bit if confronted with it. In battle, choose any other foe or maneuver, no matter how risky, if it means avoiding the object of your fear. If forced into a situation where you must confront the object of your fear, lash out swiftly and almost mindlessly (assuming it's something you can attack), desperate to slay or get rid of it as fast as possible.

RECKLESSNESS

The war has leached all the fear from you—even that which normally prevents you from doing something stupid. You are reckless, hurling yourself headlong into danger, taking unnecessary risks, and quite possibly endangering your companions in the process. You seem unable to learn from your mistakes in this matter. Though you aren't an idiot—you're not going to attack an entire regiment of warforged chargers on your own—you'll engage in any endeavor in which you see even the faintest chance of victory, and you see that chance where others see only unbeatable odds.

Roleplaying: Never hesitate to hurl yourself into danger. Scoff at the notion of retreat, until and unless the rest of your allies have already done so. Argue in favor of accepting any challenge, no matter how nervous it makes the rest of the party. You prefer more direct tactics in combat—melee over ranged, straight attacks over providing support—often placing yourself at risk in the process.

TICS AND TWITCHES

Ever since the war, you've had a strange twitch that you cannot quite suppress. This could be anything from a trembling eyelid to an occasional jerk of your head, or something rather more serious, such as an arm that sometimes flexes or a fist that clenches on its own. It's not debilitating by any means, but it is an inconvenience. You likely try to avoid taking actions that draw attention to yourself in social circumstances, out of fear of embarrassment.

Roleplaying: Although doing so could seem a bit odd at first, consider emulating your character's tic while speaking or acting in character. It's the only truly effective way of conveying the disability, and as long as the twitch isn't something horribly distracting, the other players should appreciate the effort.

WEAPON FETISHES

Every soldier learns to rely on a weapon, but you've taken that reliance to a rather disturbing extreme. You have personalized your favorite weapon, treating it as a friend and companion. You dote on it, ensuring that it remains in perfect condition, spending a small fortune to adorn it with precious stones and trophies of your victories.

Roleplaying: Talk to your weapon, both in combat and out. Spend hours polishing it, sharpening it, and caring for it. Spend a portion of your earnings on improving the weapon. This improvement can include magical enchantments, but it should also include attractive but nonfunctional ornaments, such as gems for the pommel. You absolutely will not trade the weapon for another, and you refuse to be separated from it. (This stance can cause problems, for instance if you're trying to enter a gathering that doesn't allow weapons.) You grow angry or depressed if you are forcibly separated from your weapon, and the loss or destruction of it could cause deep emotional damage.

ZEALOTRY AND EXTREMISM

You have taken your wartime loyalties to the extreme. Whether your chosen cause was a nation, a church, a dragonmarked house, or some other faction, you have developed a fanatic's view of it and the world around it. You will do almost anything, commit any act, for the sake of your cause. Anyone who opposes you for any reason is an enemy. Indeed, you might come to view anyone who is not of your nationality or faith as an enemy. This attitude is often difficult to distinguish from bigotry, as described above, except that you hate others for what they are not, rather than for what they are.

Roleplaying: A strike against you is a strike against your nation or faction, and vice versa. You have little use for outsiders, and even less for those who express any opposition to, or criticism of, your cause. You are justified in anything you do for the sake of your cause, either by divine mandate, right of birth, or moral superiority. You cannot be bothered with tasks that do not advance your cause in some way. Any failure on the part of your nation or faction must clearly be the result of outside interference, and you are more than willing to do violence on whatever enemy (read: scapegoat) seems appropriate. As with bigotry, above, this mindset should be portrayed as something for the character to overcome, at least in any good-aligned campaign.

SPELLS OF THE LAST WAR

Although the spells described below were all developed for use on the battlefields of the Last War, many of them are equally useful to adventurers. Most still see use in various national armies and mercenary companies.

Every spell here is on the list of at least one class from the *Player's Handbook* or the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*, so each is useful no matter what other game resources your campaign might or might not employ.

NEW ARTIFICER INFUSIONS

1st Level

Knight Unburdened: Remove the speed penalties for medium and heavy armor.

2nd Level

Swift Ready: Enchant armor and weapons so that they appear on you instantly when you wish.

NEW ASSASSIN SPELLS

2nd Level

Swift Ready: Enchant armor and weapons so that they appear on you instantly when you wish.

4th Level

Fracturing Weapon: Enchant a weapon so it bestows penalties to AC and DR when it strikes.

NEW BARD SPELLS

1st Level

Instant of Power: Grant ally a brief +4 bonus on attacks, saves, or damage, even when it is not your turn.

2nd Level

Swift Ready: Enchant armor and weapons so that they appear on you instantly when you wish.

3rd Level

Crown of Courage^F: +1 on attacks and damage, +4 against fear; discharge to combat fear.

NEW BLACKGUARD SPELLS

1st Level

Devastating Smite: Double the extra damage dealt by your next smite attack.

Knight Unburdened: Remove the speed penalties for medium and heavy armor.

4th Level

Fracturing Weapon: Enchant a weapon so it bestows penalties to AC and DR when it strikes.

Manifest Death: Draw negative energy from an undead, causing damage and granting you further options.

NEW CLERIC SPELLS

1st Level

Devastating Smite: Double the extra damage dealt by your next smite attack.

Protective Interposition: Trade places with ally, who gains +2 to AC; you gain +2 on next attack.

2nd Level

Holy Fire: Cause sacred fire damage to undead you attempt to turn.

3rd Level

Soldiers of Sanctity: Fellow worshipers provide bonuses to turn undead, gain AC bonus against undead.

Stand Firm: Grant instant benefits against charges, bull rushes, grapples, trips, and similar attacks.

5th Level

Crown of Courage^{F}: +1 on attacks and damage, +4 against fear; discharge to combat fear.

Fracturing Weapon: Enchant a weapon so it bestows penalties to AC and DR when it strikes.

Manifest Death: Draw negative energy from an undead, causing damage and granting you further options.

Manifest Life: Draw positive energy from a living creature, causing damage and granting you further options.

NEW DRUID SPELLS

1st Level

Instant of Power: Grant ally a brief +4 bonus on attacks, saves, or damage, even when it is not your turn.

Skunk Scent: Spit a stream of sickening fluid.

2nd Level

Predator's Cry: Emit a terrifying bellow that panics animals.

6th Level

Rusting Fog^{M}: Billowing vapors destroy metal items.

7th Level

Explosive Pinecone^{M}: Transform a pinecone into an explosive, shrapnel-hurling weapon.

NEW DUSKBLADE^{PH2} SPELLS

2nd Level

Swift Ready: Enchant armor and weapons so that they appear on you instantly when you wish.

4th Level

Fracturing Weapon: Enchant a weapon so it bestows penalties to AC and DR when it strikes.

NEW HEXBLADE^{CW} SPELLS

2nd Level

Swift Ready: Enchant armor and weapons so that they appear on you instantly when you wish.

4th Level

Fracturing Weapon: Enchant a weapon so it bestows penalties to AC and DR when it strikes.

NEW PALADIN SPELLS

1st Level

Devastating Smite: Double the extra damage dealt by your next smite attack.

Knight Unburdened: Remove the speed penalties for medium and heavy armor.

Protective Interposition: Trade places with ally, who gains +2 to AC; you gain +2 on next attack.

2nd Level

Smite of Sacred Fire: +2d6 damage on smite, continuing each round until you miss target.

3rd Level

Holy Fire: Cause sacred fire damage to undead you attempt to turn.

Soldiers of Sanctity: Fellow worshipers provide bonuses to turn undead, gain AC bonus against undead.

Stand Firm: Grant instant benefits against charges, bull rushes, grapples, trips, and similar attacks.

4th Level

Crown of Courage^{F}: +1 on attacks and damage, +4 against fear; discharge to combat fear.

Fracturing Weapon: Enchant a weapon so it bestows penalties to AC and DR when it strikes.

Manifest Life: Draw positive energy from a living creature, causing damage and granting you further options.

NEW RANGER SPELLS

1st Level

Instant of Power: Grant ally a brief +4 bonus on attacks, saves, or damage, even when it is not your turn.

Skunk Scent: Spit a stream of sickening fluid.

2nd Level

Predator's Cry: Emit a terrifying bellow that panics animals.

NEW SORCERER/WIZARD SPELLS

1st Level

Unfailing Terrain: Smooth difficult terrain.

3rd Level

Sudden Aegis: Grant a subject short-lived damage reduction, even when it is not your turn.

Spell Descriptions

The following spells are presented in alphabetical order.

CROWN OF COURAGE

Enchantment (Mind-Affecting)
Level: Bard 3, cleric 5, paladin 4
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Area: 30-ft.-radius emanation centered on the creature touched
Duration: 1 hour/level (D) or until discharged
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

A shining crown of gold appears upon the target's head. A soft light briefly glimmers in a circle around the crown, lighting the faces of your allies and filling them with courage.

This spell creates a crown of magical energy that grants the spell's recipient and all allies within 30 feet a +1 bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls, and a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear.

As an immediate action, the creature wearing a *crown of courage* can discharge its magic to grant himself and all allies within 30 feet a new saving throw against any fear effect currently affecting them, with the +4 morale bonus granted by the crown. The spell ends after the wearer uses the crown in this manner.

The crown occupies space on the body as a headband, hat, or helm. If the targeted creature is already wearing an item on its head, the casting of this spell fails. If the crown is removed, or if the targeted creature dons an item that occupies its head, the spell immediately ends.

Focus: A thin golden hoop 6 inches in diameter costing 50 gp.

DEVASTATING SMITE

Transmutation
Level: Blackguard 1, cleric 1, paladin 1
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 swift action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 round or until discharged; see text
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You call your deity's name aloud, beseeching her to smite your foes. Your holy symbol briefly hums with power, as does your subject's weapon.

The next smite attack made by the subject deals double its normal smite damage. For instance, a 9th-level paladin normally deals an extra 9 points of damage with her smite evil ability. Under the effect of this spell, she would deal an extra 18 points of damage.

The spell applies to only one smite attack; if that attack misses, the spell is lost without effect.

EXPLOSIVE PINECONE

Transmutation
Level: Druid 7
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: One pinecone
Duration: 10 min./level or until used; see text
Saving Throw: None or Reflex half; see text
Spell Resistance: No

The pinecone grows hot to the touch, pulsing with mystical energy.

You transform a pinecone into a devastating grenade. It functions as a splash weapon that can be hurled as far as 100 feet. A successful ranged touch attack roll is required to strike the intended target. Upon impact, the pinecone detonates, dealing 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 25d6) to its target. All other creatures within 20 feet take 1 point of splash (shrapnel) damage per die. A creature within this area that makes a successful Reflex saving throw takes half damage; a creature struck directly is not allowed a saving throw.

For a period of time equal to 10 minutes per level of the caster, the area of the blast (a 20-foot radius around the impact point) is covered in razor-sharp shrapnel. Any creature moving on foot into or through this area moves at half speed and takes 1d8 points of piercing damage for each 5 feet of movement through the area.

Material Component: A pinecone.

FRACTURING WEAPON

Transmutation
Level: Assassin 4, blackguard 4, cleric 5, duskblade 4, hexblade 3, paladin 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Melee weapon touched
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless, object)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

The weapon quivers at your touch, and a deep gong reverberates in the distance. As the sound fades, the weapon begins to emanate a dull gray radiance, making your vision swim when you attempt to look directly at it.

Once per round for the spell's duration, the wielder of the targeted weapon can declare a single melee attack to be a fracturing blow. If that attack successfully deals damage to an opponent, the foe takes a –5 penalty to Armor Class and damage reduction (if any, to a minimum of 0).

The penalties are applied after the damage from the *fracturing weapon* attack has been resolved. The penalties last for a single round, but the wielder can attack it again on his or her next turn and attempt to reinvoke the penalty.

The cleric Adamant uses holy fire to obliterate undead threatening his allies

HOLY FIRE

Evocation [Fire, Good]
Level: Cleric 2, paladin 3
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 swift action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round

Your holy symbol and your eyes erupt in a blaze of silver fire.

All undead within range of your next turning attempt (if you make it before this spell's duration expires) are especially vulnerable to the attempt. Whether you succeed in turning them or not, the undead take hit point damage equal to the result of your turning damage roll. This damage is half fire and half sacred energy.

INSTANT OF POWER

Transmutation
Level: Bard 1, druid 1, ranger 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 immediate action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 round
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

With a shout and a gesture, you send a wave of power from yourself to your ally. The air ripples at its passage.

You bestow a brief moment of power on your ally, granting a +4 enhancement bonus on his next attack roll, saving throw, or damage roll.

KNIGHT UNBURDENED

Transmutation
Level: Artificer 1, blackguard 1, paladin 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

A ripple passes through the target's armor at your touch, as though the metal had turned to water. Though it fades as swiftly as it began, the effect seems to leave the armor lighter, even vaguely translucent in direct light.

The subject of this spell ignores the standard movement penalties for wearing medium or heavy armor. He suffers all the other drawbacks for the armor he wears, such as maximum Dexterity bonus to AC, armor check penalty on skills, arcane spell failure chance, and so forth.

Note that a subject of this spell still cannot use class features and other abilities that do not function when he wears medium or heavy armor.

MANIFEST DEATH

Necromancy
Level: Blackguard 4, cleric 5
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Undead creature touched, then living creature or undead creature touched
Duration: Instantaneous/1 minute or until discharged; see text
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

Your touch siphons some of the animating negative energy from an undead creature, leaving a soul-numbing ball of darkness in your grasp.

To employ this spell, you must succeed on a melee touch attack against an undead creature. If you do so, your touch deals 1d6 points of damage per two caster levels (maximum 15d6). This damage represents negative energy that you draw from the subject, resulting in a ball of writhing shadow you hold in your hand. You can use this ball of negative energy in one of three ways.

- You can, in any following round, touch any other undead creature with that negative energy, as a standard action. The undead creature absorbs the energy, healing as many points of damage as you dealt to the initial subject, up to the new subject's normal maximum hit points.
- You can use the ball of negative energy to make a melee touch against a living creature, dealing the same amount of damage you initially dealt.
- You can use it to power a rebuke undead attempt. The next rebuke attempt you make, so long as it occurs before the spell's duration expires, does not count against your daily limit.

The ball of negative energy dissipates in 1 minute if not used, and it vanishes immediately if you use your hand for some other purpose.

MANIFEST LIFE

Necromancy
Level: Cleric 5, paladin 4
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Living creature touched, then living creature or undead creature touched
Duration: Instantaneous/1 minute or until discharged; see text
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

Your touch draws life force from your target, manifesting it in your hand as a glowing ball of positive energy.

To employ this spell, you must succeed on a melee touch attack against a living creature. If you do so, your touch deals 1d6 points of damage per two caster levels (maximum 15d6). This damage represents actual life force that you take from the subject, resulting in a ball of positive energy you hold in your hand. You can use this ball of positive energy in one of three ways.

- You can, in any following round, touch yourself or any other living creature with that positive energy, as a standard action. The living creature absorbs the energy, healing as many points of damage as you dealt to the initial subject, up to the new subject's full normal hit points.
- You can use the ball of positive energy to make a melee touch against an undead creature, dealing the same amount of damage you initially dealt.
- You can use it to power a turn undead attempt. The next turning attempt you make, so long as it occurs before the spell's duration expires, does not count against your daily limit.

The ball of positive energy dissipates in 1 minute if not used, and it vanishes immediately if you use your hand for some other purpose.

PREDATOR'S CRY

Necromancy [Fear, Mind-Affecting, Sonic]
Level: Druid 2, ranger 2
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 swift action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: Up to one animal/level, no two of which are more than 60 ft. apart
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will partial
Spell Resistance: Yes

You emit a terrifying bellow, the sound of which scrapes your throat raw but carries across the winds like the fiercest war cry or the howling of the wolf.

Particularly effective against cavalry, this spell causes all affected animals to become panicked. If a panicked animal carries a rider, the rider must succeed on a DC 25 Ride check to prevent the animal from trying to flee the battlefield. If the animal successfully saves, it is instead shaken for the duration of the spell.

PROTECTIVE INTERPOSITION

Conjuration (Teleportation)
Level: Cleric 1, paladin 1
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 swift action
Range: Touch
Target: One willing creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

As you lay a hand on your ally's shoulder, the two of you instantly switch places. A glowing image of your deity's holy symbol lingers for an instant where you touched your friend.

When you cast this spell, you and one willing ally trade positions. If you occupy different spaces, the smaller of you must occupy at least one square previously occupied by the larger, the larger creature's new space must completely cover the space previously occupied by the smaller, and you must start and end adjacent to each other.

Your ally gains a +2 sacred bonus to AC and on saves for 1 round, and you gain a +2 sacred bonus on a melee attack roll you make in the same round when you cast the spell.

RUSTING FOG

Transmutation
Level: Druid 6
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Effect: Cloud spreads in 20-ft. radius, 20 ft. high
Duration: 1 round/2 levels
Saving Throw: None or Fortitude negates (object); see text
Spell Resistance: No

A bank of red-brown vapors billows up from the earth at your gesture, rolling forward as though with a mind of its own.

The corrosive vapors created by this spell rust any metal they touch. Nonmagical objects made of iron, iron alloys, or other ferrous metals take 1d4 points of damage

A well-placed rusting fog ensures that these orcs will be fighting no one else today

for every round of exposure. This damage ignores hardness. Metal armor affected by *rusting fog* loses 1d4 points of Armor Class for each round of exposure, as well as taking damage. An item reduced to 0 hit points is destroyed. Ferrous creatures within the cloud suffer the same damage as objects.

Magic items can resist with a successful Fortitude save. They are entitled to a new save for each round of exposure, but need not save again once they succeed.

Material Component: Rust particles from a formerly magic metal item.

SKUNK SCENT

Conjuration (Creation)
Level: Druid 1, ranger 1
Components: S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: 30 ft.
Target: One living creature
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude partial; see text
Spell Resistance: No

You spit a stream of truly vile-smelling, repulsive fluid.

To employ this spell, you must make a successful ranged touch attack. If you hit, the target is sickened for the duration and cannot make use of the scent ability (if it possesses that ability). A successful Fortitude save reduces the duration to 1 round.

SMITE OF SACRED FIRE

Evocation (Good)
Level: Paladin 2
Components: V, DF
Casting Time: 1 swift action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level; see text

As you ready your weapon to smite your foe, you whisper a quick prayer to all that is good and holy.

You must cast this spell in the same round when you attempt a smite attack. If the attack hits, you deal an extra 2d6 points of damage to the target of the smite. Whether or not you succeed on the smite attempt, during each subsequent round of the spell's duration, you deal an extra 2d6 points of damage on any successful melee attack against the target you attempted to smite. The spell ends prematurely after any round when you do not attempt a melee attack against the target you previously attempted to smite, or if you fail to hit with any of your attacks in a round.

SOLDIERS OF SANCTITY

Evocation [Good]
Level: Cleric 3, paladin 3
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 full round
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: You, plus one willing creature/2 levels; see text

Duration: 1 min./level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

You raise your voice in a paean to your god, a sound that reverberates upward. You see your allies' lips moving in concert, and their eyes widen with the glory of the divine.

For the duration of *soldiers of sanctity*, you gain a bonus on turning checks and turning damage rolls made when you have allies within 30 feet of you. This is a sacred bonus, equal to the number of allies within 30 feet, to a maximum of +6.

In addition, each target gains a +2 bonus to AC against all attacks made by undead creatures. This bonus applies for the duration of the spell as long as an ally is within 30 feet of you.

STAND FIRM

Transmutation
Level: Cleric 3, paladin 3
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 immediate action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Targets: One creature/2 levels
Duration: 1 round/level; see text
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

With a shouted command of "Hold!" you feel mystical forces flowing through you, bolstering your allies against attack.

The *stand firm* spell was a creation of Thrane divine warriors to be used as a defense against Karrnath's mighty cavalry. All subjects of the spell gain a +4 morale bonus to Armor Class against charge attacks, and on opposed checks for the purpose of defending against bull rushes, grapples, overrun attacks, and trip attacks.

The spell remains in effect on a subject (up to its maximum duration) so long as that subject does not move. If a subject moves, taking even so much as a 5-foot step, it loses the spell's benefit.

SUDDEN AEGIS

Abjuration
Level: Sorcerer/wizard 3
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 immediate action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 round
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

A shimmering aura surrounds your ally, vaguely resembling a suit of phantom armor.

You instantly but briefly grant the subject damage reduction 10/adamantine.

SWIFT READY

Conjuration (Summoning)
Level: Artificer 2, assassin 2, bard 2, duskblade 2, hexblade 2
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 minute (and 1 swift action to invoke afterward; see text)
Range: Touch
Target: One, two, or three specific objects; see text
Duration: 24 hours or until invoked; see text
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless, object)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

Your equipment warms slightly, then swiftly cools. Beneath your touch, a faint image of your hand remains, visible only to you.

You can cast this spell on one or more of the following groups of items:

- One suit of armor or other item of clothing (such as a robe or cloak); plus either
- One or two weapons, tools, or magic items, each small enough to be wielded in a single hand; or
- One weapon, tool, or magic item that is normally wielded in both hands.

Thus, for instance, you could cast the spell on a robe and a staff, or on a suit of armor, a longsword, and a shield.

At any time before the spell expires, you can, as a swift action, cause the affected equipment to instantly appear on your body or in your grasp, as though you had taken the time to properly don and prepare it. You must have line of sight to the equipment, and it cannot be in the possession of any other creature. Invoking the spell causes the duration to end instantly.

UNFAILING TERRAIN

Transmutation
Level: Sorcerer/wizard 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Area: Up to two 10-ft. squares/level (S)
Duration: 1 min./level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

At your gesture, the terrain flattens itself, as though a great weight pressed down upon it.

You cover an area of solid terrain with a faint layer of semisolid magic. This effect transforms difficult terrain into clear, flat terrain, allowing full movement, charge attacks, and any other skill use or movement normally impeded by difficult terrain.

This spell is not sufficient to actually cause the terrain to bear weight, however, so pitfalls, quicksand, and liquid surfaces still function normally in that respect.

MAGIC ITEMS

The Last War kept magewrights and artificers busy, providing incentive to create new magic items and ample opportunities to test them in the field. This section describes new weapon and armor properties and magic items of various types used in the Last War.

ARMOR AND SHIELD PROPERTIES

These special abilities can be added to protective items that already have an enhancement bonus of at least +1.

Resilient

Price: +1 bonus
Property: Armor or shield
Caster Level: 8th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 19) transmutation
Activation: Immediate (command)
Weight: —

This item has certainly seen better days, covered as it is with scratches and dings. Nevertheless, it appears remarkably solid, and forged by the finest smiths.

Resilient armor and shields are magically enhanced to protect the wearer against all sorts of harm. As an immediate action, you can use some or all of the item's enhancement bonus to Armor Class as a bonus on one kind of saving throw instead. For instance, if you carry a *+3 resilient heavy shield* and you are caught in a *fireball*, you could immediately grant yourself a bonus of from +1 to +3 on Reflex saves, but you would lose that same amount from the shield's bonus to AC. You must declare which save the bonus applies to when you activate the ability. The bonus on the save, and the loss of the bonus to AC, last until the end of your next turn.

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *magic vestment*.

Cost to Create: Varies.

Spell-Catching

Price: +2 bonus
Property: Light shield, heavy shield, or tower shield
Caster Level: 9th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 19) abjuration
Activation: Immediate (command)
Weight: —

This shield is smooth to the touch and forged of the finest materials. Its most notable feature is the Eberron dragonshard embedded in the back side, between the heavy leather straps.

Once per day as an immediate action, you can command a spell-catching shield to absorb a spell cast upon you. The spell must must of be 3rd level or lower, and it must target you specifically; area spells do not qualify. The absorbed spell fails to affect you in any way and is instead stored within the dragonshard. At any time thereafter, for up to 1 hour per level of the spell, you can cast the spell out of the dragonshard. Doing this takes the standard casting time for that spell, and it functions at the caster level of its original caster. So long as a spell-catching shield holds a spell, it cannot absorb any other spell.

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *spell resistance*.

Cost to Create: Varies.

Spell-Catching, Greater

Price: +4 bonus
Caster Level: 11th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 20) abjuration

As spell-catching, except the shield can absorb a spell of up to 6th level.

Cost to Create: Varies.

HERALDIC CRESTS

A heraldic crest is a special magical property that can be placed on any light shield, heavy shield, or tower shield that

A NOTE ON FORMAT

The magic items described here use the format introduced in *Magic Item Compendium*. Aspects of that format that might not be self-explanatory are described below.

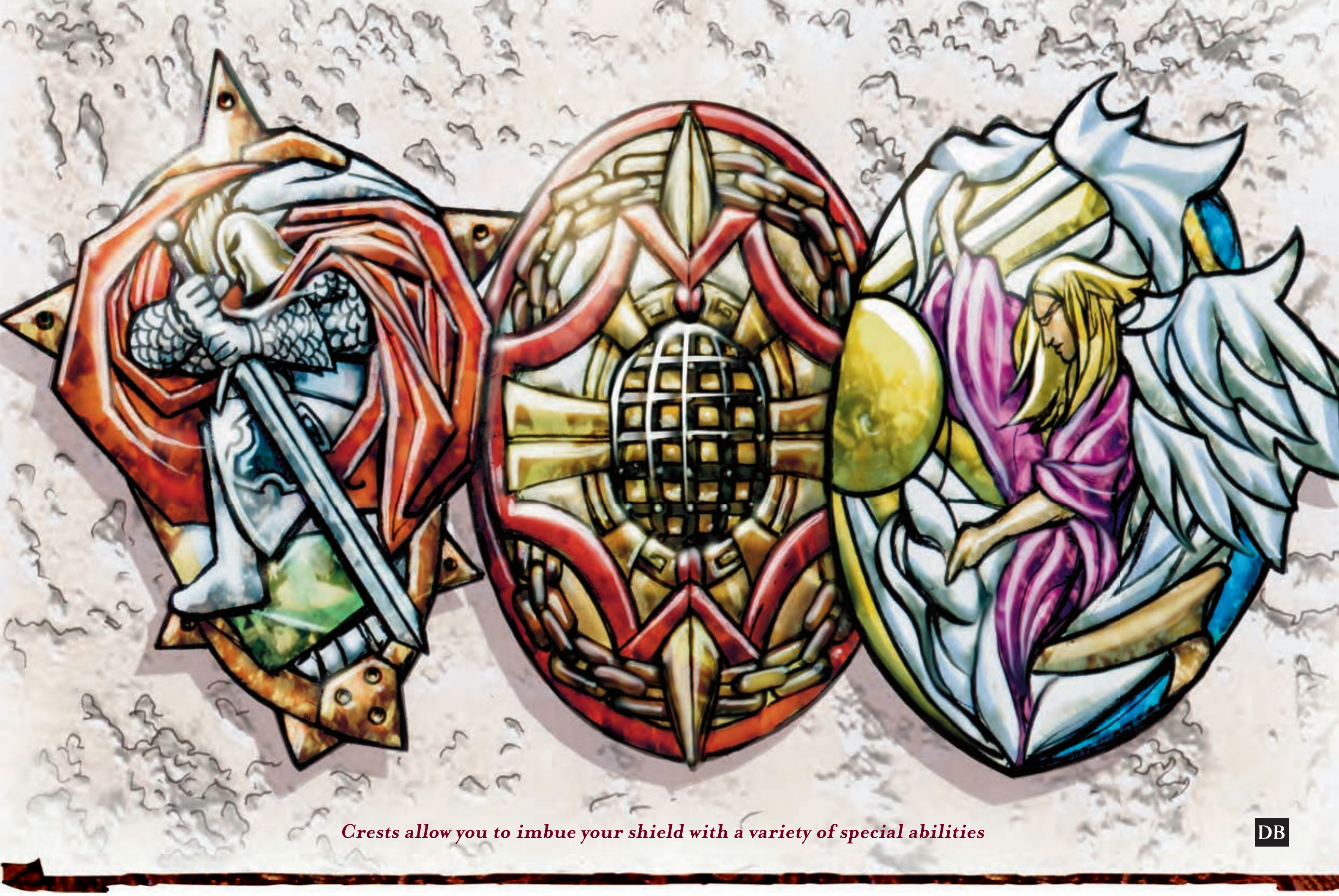
Price (Item Level): This entry gives the price of the item in gold pieces and the item level. Item level is a guideline for the DM to estimate the level at which a character can reasonably attain the item. It is unrelated to caster level.

Body Slot: This entry identifies the place on the body where the item is worn. For items not worn in a body slot, — (held) designates an item held in the hands and — designates items that need only be carried on your person or otherwise utilized without being worn or held.

Aura: This entry gives information that can be obtained with a *detect magic* spell. It lists the strength of the item's aura, the DC of the Spellcraft check required to determine the school of magic, and the school of magic associated with the aura.

Activation: The kind of action required to activate the item is given here, followed by a description of what a character does during the activation. For example, a "swift (command)" item requires a swift action to activate and requires the activator to speak a command word. An entry of "—" means the effect is continuous and requires no activation.

New Categories: In *Magic Item Compendium*, items were categorized differently from those in the *Dungeon Master's Guiide*, based on their function or the way they are employed. Items that are worn on the body are now classified as clothing. (In this book, warforged components are categorized separately even though they are essentially "clothing" as well.) Items that are held or carried, except for those designed for use as weapons, are considered tools. (In this book, standards are categorized separately even though they are essentially "tools" as well.) Because this book includes only one item of clothing (aside from warforged components) and one tool (aside from standards), those two items are grouped together under a single header.



Crests allow you to imbue your shield with a variety of special abilities

has an enhancement bonus of +1 or higher. Each heraldic crest grants a minor benefit to the shield's bearer so long as the bearer meets one of the following criteria.

- Has the Leadership feat; or
- Has been specially granted the right to use the heraldic crest by a lord, high priest, commanding officer, or similar authority. The DM is the final arbiter as to whether any character meets this criterion.

Each shield that bears a heraldic crest has a more potent ability that can be used once per day. Any character who meets at least one of the criteria can activate the magical power of the shield's heraldic crest as a free action. Unless otherwise noted, the power affects the shield's bearer only.

No shield can bear more than one heraldic crest. If a shield that has a heraldic crest is imbued with a second crest, the first crest vanishes. For additional heraldic crests beyond those presented here, see *Heroes of Battle.*

The creator of a heraldic crest must meet at least one of the above criteria, in addition to having access to the usual prerequisites for creation as given in the description of a crest.

Bloodlust

Price: +6,000 gp
Property: Light shield, heavy shield, or tower shield
Caster Level: 5th
Aura: Faint; (DC 17) transmutation
Activation: — and free (command)
Weight: —

This crest is emblazoned with a longsword clenched in a mailed fist.

You gain a +4 morale bonus on attack rolls to confirm critical threats. Once per day, on command, the shield produces a *keen edge* effect on one weapon you carry.

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *keen edge*.
Cost to Create: 3,000 gp, 240 XP, 6 days.

Bolstering

Price: +16,000 gp
Property: Light shield, heavy shield, or tower shield
Caster Level: 7th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 18) abjuration
Activation: — and free (command)
Weight: —

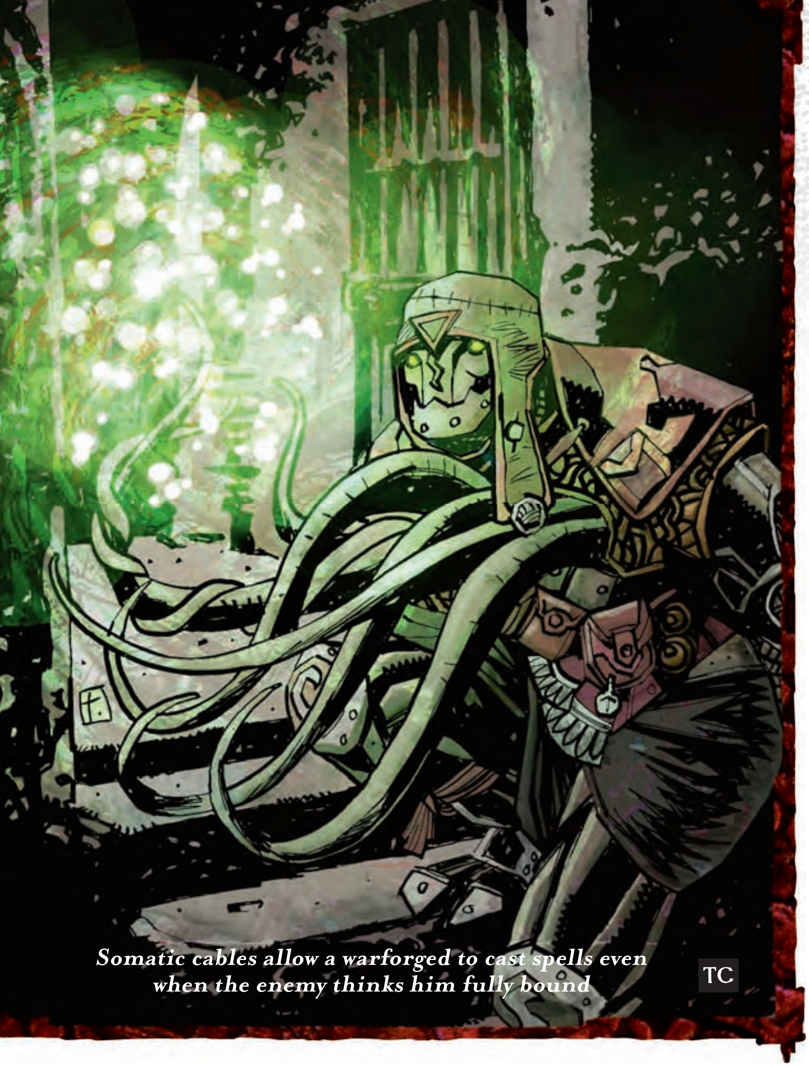
This crest depicts a raised hand, palm outward as though warding off a threat.

You gain a +1 morale bonus on Fortitude and Reflex saves. Once per day you can use the shield to produce a *resist energy* effect on yourself with a duration of 7 rounds.

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *resist energy*.
Cost to Create: 8,000 gp, 640 XP, 16 days.

Inspiration

Price: +11,000 gp
Property: Light shield, heavy shield, or tower shield
Caster Level: 5th
Aura: Faint; (DC 17) enchantment
Activation: — and free (command)
Weight: —



Somatic cables allow a warforged to cast spells even when the enemy thinks him fully bound

This shield bears the crest of a golden sunrise, with an angelic silhouette emerging from it.

If you have an extraordinary or supernatural aura that benefits your allies, such as a paladin's aura against fear, or any of the auras projected by the marshal^{MH} or dragon shaman^{PH2}, the effective range of those auras is doubled. Once per day, on command, the shield produces a *prayer* effect centered on you.

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *prayer*, ability to project a beneficial aura as an extraordinary or supernatural ability.

Cost to Create: 5,500 gp, 440 XP, 11 days.

WEAPON PROPERTY

This special ability can be added to a weapon that already has an enhancement bonus of at least +1.

Intercepting

Price: +1 bonus
Property: Melee weapon
Caster Level: 8th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 19) transmutation
Activation: Free (command)
Weight: —

You find the weapon unusually light for its length, and remarkably easy to swing into position. It has a spiked end-cap at the base of the haft.

This weapon grants you one extra attack in a round. If a foe attempts to charge, bull rush, overrun, or grapple you, you make a single melee attack against that foe before he attempts his action. This attack is not an attack of opportunity, which means it functions against targets that normally do not provoke attacks of opportunity when they attempt such special maneuvers.

If you make a successful intercepting attack against a charging, bull rushing, or overrunning opponent, the weapon deals double damage. In addition, if the attack lands against a charging opponent, that foe loses the normal +2 bonus to hit due to the charge, but retains the associated Armor Class penalty.

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *cat's grace*.

Cost to Create: Varies.

WARFORGED COMPONENTS

These items follow all the standard rules for warforged components (*ECS* 267).

Finger Picks

Price (Item Level): 500 gp (3rd)
Body Slot: Hands (embedded)
Caster Level: 5th
Aura: Faint; (DC 17) transmutation
Activation: —
Weight: —

With a faint click, a series of slender wires, probes, and picks slide from the tips of your fingers.

These delicate, intricate tools function as masterwork thieves' tools that grant an additional +2 bonus on Disable Device and Open Lock checks, for a total bonus of +4.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *knock*.

Cost to Create: 200 gp (plus 100 gp for masterwork thieves' tools), 16 XP, 1 day.

Projection Orb

Price (Item Level): 25,200 gp (16th)
Body Slot: Face (embedded) and —; see text
Caster Level: 7th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 18) divination
Activation: Standard (mental)
Weight: — and 7 lb. (globe); see text

A perfectly spherical globe, resembling a small crystal ball, glints with the same glassy hue as your own eyes.

This "item" is made up of three parts: two crystalline eyes embedded in your face, and a matching globe. As a standard action, you can cause anything you see to appear in the globe, allowing its possessor to view what you are viewing. Deactivating the link is a swift action.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *scrying*.

Cost to Create: 12,600 gp, 1,008 XP, 26 days.

Somatic Cables

Price (Item Level): 16,200 gp (14th)
Body Slot: Torso (embedded)
Caster Level: 10th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 20) transmutation
Activation: Swift (mental)
Weight: —

A small mass of writhing metal cables slides from your chest, twisting about one another in arcane configurations.

Developed for spellcasting warforged, *somatic cables* can be used to execute the somatic component of any spell. This effect allows a warforged to cast spells even with both hands occupied, when its hands are immobilized, or even when grappled (though this still requires a Concentration check). A warforged who suffers from a spell failure chance due to armor can roll twice, taking the better of the two results.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, Still Spell, *telekinesis*.

Cost to Create: 14,700 gp, 1,176 XP, 30 days.

CLOTHING AND TOOLS

Dragonshard Pommel Stone

Price (Item Level): See text
Body Slot: —
Caster Level: See text
Aura: See text
Activation: See text
Weight: 1/4 lb.

This Eberron dragonshard swirls with abnormally deep red patterns beneath its lighter surface. It has clearly been shaped to fit into the pommel of a weapon.

Perhaps one of the most broadly useful creations of House Cannith before the Last War, *dragonshard pommel stones* allow warriors and adventurers to easily transfer enchantments between weapons. Although they gained great favor with certain officers during the Last War, they were not sufficiently cost-effective to see widespread use.

A *dragonshard pommel stone* can be enchanted as though it were a melee weapon. It can have an enhancement bonus of +1 to +5, and any melee weapon special ability, such as keen or flaming burst. As with a weapon, it must have at least a +1 enhancement bonus before it can receive any special abilities, and it is limited to an effective total bonus of +10.

On its own, a *dragonshard pommel stone* serves little purpose. Over the course of 1 minute, however, it can be attached to any masterwork melee weapon. The weapon then takes on all the qualities imbued in the pommel stone. For instance, if a stone is enchanted to be a *+2 spell storing* item, any melee weapon it is attached to becomes a *+2 spell storing weapon*. If the pommel stone is removed—requiring a full-round action—the weapon reverts to its prior state, and the stone can be attached to some other weapon. A *dragonshard pommel stone* can be attached to a weapon that already has an enhancement bonus and possibly also one or more special properties, but the magic of the pommel stone supersedes the existing enchantments; the weapon cannot benefit from both at once. A *dragonshard pommel stone* fails to function when attached to an epic weapon, a weapon of legacy, or an artifact (and indeed this failure might be the first indication that such an item is more than it appears.)

A weapon can have only a single pommel stone attached at any time. Double weapons are an exception to this rule; such a weapon can have two pommel stones, each of which grants its benefit to a single end of the weapon.

The base price of a dragonshard pommel stone is 125% of the base price of a weapon that has the same abilities. For instance, a *+2 spell storing longsword* is effectively a +3 weapon, and thus has a base price of 18,000 gp. A dragonshard pommel stone with the same enhancements (or any others totaling an effective bonus of +3) would instead have a base price of 22,500 gp (resulting in a cost to create of 11,250 gp, 900 XP, 23 days).

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, varies.

Cost to Create: Varies.

Gloves of Deadly Casting

Price (Item Level): 14,000 gp (14th)
Body Slot: Hands
Caster Level: 7th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 18) transmutation
Activation: —
Weight: 1 lb.

These lambskin gloves are a deep blue in color. Embroidered across them in black is a webwork pattern of mystic runes.

These gloves double the critical threat range (usually from 20 to 19–20) of any ray spells and touch attack spells you cast. This bnefit does not stack with that of the Improved Critical feat.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, any other metamagic feat, *keen edge*.

Cost to Create: 7,000 gp, 560 XP, 14 days.

STANDARDS

A standard (sometimes called a banner) flies above a unit of an army, borne by a soldier. Unless otherwise noted, all allies of the standard-bearer within 30 feet of the standard receive the indicated benefit for as long as they can see the standard.

In the right hands, a magical standard can mean the difference between victory and defeat

A standard normally requires two hands to bear, so a two-armed holder is unable to use a weapon or shield when carrying one. In some cases a standard is mounted on a weapon, and that weapon can be used normally in combat.

If a standard-bearer falls during combat, any magical benefits granted by the standard cease. If the standard is not raised again by an ally within 1 round, all those who were benefiting from it become shaken (Will DC 20 negates). For more standards beyond those presented here, see *Heroes of Battle*.

Archers' Standard

Price (Item Level): 4,000 gp (8th)
Body Slot: —
Caster Level: 5th
Aura: Faint; (DC 17) divination
Activation: —
Weight: 5 lb.

This banner depicts a black arrow against a sky-blue field.

Any allied archer who shoots an arrow or a bolt while under the effect of this standard can ignore the first range increment. Thus, the attack does not start taking penalties until three range increments, rather than two, and it can travel as far as eleven range increments, rather than the normal maximum of ten.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, Far Shot, *true strike*.

Cost to Create: 2,000 gp, 160 XP, 4 days.

Bloody Banner of Valaes Tairn

Price (Item Level): 14,000 gp (14th)
Body Slot: —
Caster Level: 7th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 18) enchantment
Activation: —
Weight: 5 lb.

This blood-red banner shows a black silhouette of a mounted warrior wielding a curved blade.

The Valenar revel in combat, and they created this banner to prevent enemies from stealing their glory. Unlike other standards, a *bloody banner of Valaes Tairn* affects enemies of the bearer within 30 feet, rather than allies. The standard prevents the enemy from retreating or otherwise leaving combat. Any attempt to move outside the 30-foot area—either physically or by magic—requires a DC 16 Will save. Failure indicates that the individual cannot voluntarily leave the area, though he can otherwise act normally, and can try again in the following round.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, *suggestion*, Valenar elf.

Cost to Create: 7,000 gp, 560 XP, 14 days.

Commander's Pennant

Price (Item Level): 1,000 gp (4th)
Body Slot: —
Caster Level: 5th
Aura: Faint; (DC 17) transmutation
Activation: —
Weight: 5 lb.

This flapping banner bears the national emblem of the kingdom, surrounded by a faint silver aura.

First developed by Aundairian battle wizards to coordinate their troops, a *commander's pennant* facilitates communication. All allies within 120 feet can communicate clearly with the standard-bearer by speaking in a normal tone of voice, and vice versa. This effect allows the bearer to give orders to an entire unit, or to give specific commands to select soldiers, and allows the troops to report instantly on their situation.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *message*.

Cost to Create: 500 gp, 40 XP, 1 day.

Knight's Banner

Price (Item Level): 5,500 gp (10th)
Body Slot: —
Caster Level: 5th
Aura: Faint; (DC 17) transmutation
Activation: —
Weight: 5 lb.

This standard shows the silhouette of an armored knight on horseback, lance lowered, charging across a deep green field.

Karrnath's artificers developed this banner to augment their masses of cavalry. All mounts within 60 feet of the standard-bearer that belong to, or are ridden by, allies of the standard-bearer gain a +10-foot enhancement bonus to their land speed. Their riders gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Ride checks.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *haste*, Ride 8 ranks.

Cost to Create: 6,000 gp, 480 XP, 12 days.

Sign of Broken Steel

Price (Item Level): 10,000 gp (12th)
Body Slot: —
Caster Level: 5th
Aura: Faint; (DC 17) evocation
Activation: —
Weight: 5 lb.

Emblazoned across a rust-brown field is the image of a broken sword in silver.

All allies gain a +2 enhancement bonus on damage rolls against constructs, living constructs, and inanimate objects (including the damage rolled when making a sunder attempt). Additionally, they ignore up to 4 points of hardness when attacking inanimate objects, and up to 2 points of damage reduction when attacking constructs.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *shatter*.

Cost to Create: 5,000 gp, 400 XP, 10 days.

Silver Standard

Price (Item Level): 18,000 gp (14th)
Body Slot: —
Caster Level: 5th
Aura: Faint; (DC 17) evocation
Activation: —
Weight: 5 lb.

This standard depicts the great and holy Silver Flame and a background of checkered navy blue and white.

This banner radiates bright silver light out to 30 feet. All attempts to turn (but not rebuke) undead within that area gain a +3 sacred bonus.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *daylight, consecrate*.

Cost to Create: 9,000 gp, 720 XP, 18 days.

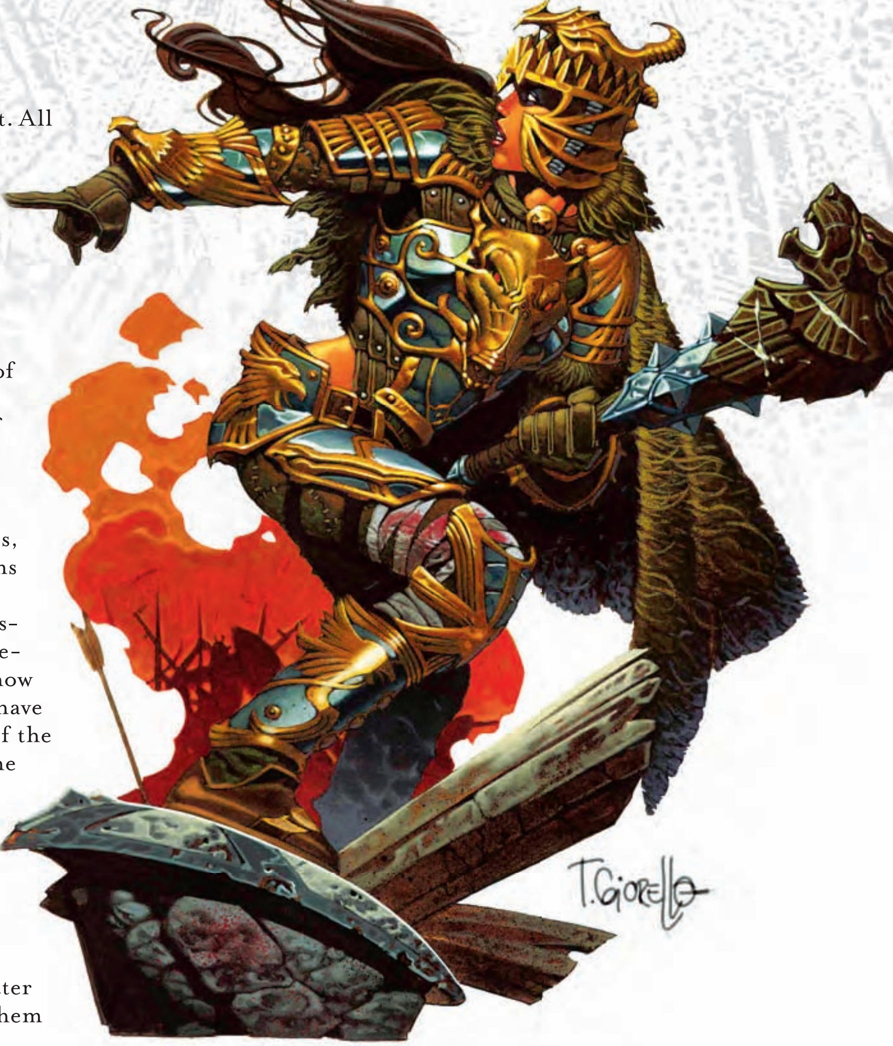
MAGIC ITEM SETS

The *war regalia of Galifar*, decribed below, is an example of a magic item set—a new type of grouped magic items introduced in *Magic Item Compendium.* A set consists of three to six thematically linked items that provide an extra bonus or effect when more than one of them are worn together. These collection powers scale or accumulate as the number of items worn increases, with a particularly potent effect granted when all items of the set are worn or used together.

Creating a Set: Each magic item set began existence as one original set. That original set was created or discovered in some legendary fashion, but now others can copy the items in the set so long as they have a piece of a set to work from. If you have a piece of the set, you can create any other piece of the set using the normal magic item creation rules. You don't need to find one of the original set's pieces to make your own; any piece you find can function as the genesis for recreating the entire set.

Collecting Item Sets: Because you must first have a piece of a set to create more, DMs can control the introduction of sets and their prevalence in the world. Once a set piece is introduced, a character might be able to create the other pieces or pay for them to be created.

A character can usually begin accumulating a set at a relatively low level with the first item, and collect more expensive set pieces as he advances. He might receive the first piece of a set around 6th level and then possess a completed set between 10th and 15th level.



A commander garbed in the war regalia of Galifar leads her troops to victory

WAR REGALIA OF GALIFAR

Forged for Galifar I to commemorate the unification of the Five Nations as the Kingdom of Galifar, the *war regalia of Galifar* was as powerful a symbol of his kingdom as his standard or his legal code. Passed from sovereign to sovereign during the nine centuries that Galifar remained united, the items that make up the regalia—like the Five Nations themselves—are more powerful united than split apart.

Designed for battle, the *war regalia of Galifar* is most useful to characters who are comfortable wearing medium metal armor and wading into melee. Except for the *breastplate of Thrane,* the pieces of the regalia are useful to almost any character, although the *scepter of Karrnath* is a martial weapon.

Lore

Characters who have ranks in Knowledge (arcana) or the bardic knowledge ability can research the *war regalia of Galifar* to learn more about it. On a successful check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 15: To celebrate the adoption of the name Kingdom of Galifar twenty years after unification, Galifar I received a gift from House Cannith—a set of armor representing the Five Nations bound into a single kingdom. For nine centuries, the rulers of Galifar passed these items down, keeping them together as a set for as long as Galifar remained intact.

DC 20: Some time after the death of King Jarot, the *war regalia of Galifar* was stolen from Thronehold (to the lasting disgrace of House Deneith's Throne Wardens). Eventually, it appears, the six pieces of the regalia were separated, and new sets were made based on the separate pieces. The original *mantle of Breland* might have first found its way to Breland, but since then, four or more of copies of that original have been made.

DC 25: The scions of Jarot have always been quiet about the *war regalia of Galifar,* never appearing dressed in a full set or even making claims of ownership. That hasn't stopped various pretenders to rulership of Galifar from collecting a set, claiming it to be the original, and using that to somehow try to legitimize their claim to the throne. Rumors are circulating even now that a Darguun warlord has assembled a full set and wears it in mockery both of the human nation and of the Lhesh Haruuc, who claims authority over the goblinoids.

DC 30: A result that meets or exceeds this DC reveals the location of a piece of the set not yet obtained. The DM can use this outcome to drive further adventure and direct the PCs toward some location or story he would like them to explore.

WAR REGALIA OF GALIFAR PIECES AND ABILITIES

Piece	Body Slot	Price (Level)	Ability
Breastplate of Thrane	Body	8,350 gp (12th)	*+2 breastplate*, +2 on Will saves, reroll mental save 1/day
Crown of Cyre	Head	40,000 gp (17th)	Project aura for +3 to damage or Cha-based skills, or fast healing 3
Greaves of Aundair	Feet	5,000 gp (9th)	+5 ft. speed; take immediate move action 3/day
Mantle of Breland	Shoulders	15,000 gp (14th)	Bear form 3/day
Scepter of Karrnath	— (held)	20,310 gp (15th)	*+1 domineering greatclub;* critical hit forces foe prone

COLLECTION BENEFITS

Pieces Worn	Benefit
2 pieces	Captain's smite 3/day
3 pieces	+2 on attack rolls and damage rolls with captain's smite
4 pieces	Captain's smite 5/day
5 pieces	75% resistance to critical hits

Collection Benefits

Wearing parts of the *war regalia of Galifar* grants its owner incredible resilience and resistance to physical damage. When a creature wears all the pieces of the *war regalia of Galifar* and wields the *scepter of Karrnath,* she is surrounded by a visibly shimmering aura. She advances into battle like an automaton, fearing no critical hit or sneak attack.

2 Pieces: Wearing or wielding two items grants you the ability to make a captain's smite three times per day with one normal melee attack. You do not gain any bonus on your attack rolls or damage rolls with this attack, but if you hit, your allies gain a +4 morale bonus on their attack rolls against that target for 1 round.

3 Pieces: When you use your captain's smite ability, you gain a +2 bonus on your attack rolls and damage rolls with that attack.

4 Pieces: You can use a captain's smite five times per day.

5 Pieces: When an opponent scores a critical hit or sneak attack on you, there is a 75% chance that the critical hit or sneak attack is negated and damage is instead rolled normally.

PIECES OF THE WAR REGALIA OF GALIFAR

The following items make up the *war regalia of Galifar.*

Breastplate of Thrane

Price (Item Level): 8,350 gp (12th)
Body Slot: Body
Caster Level: 7th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 18) enchantment
Activation: — and immediate (mental)
Weight: 30 lb.

This breastplate is decorated with an elaborate boar's head motif. The workmanship is exceptionally fine, and there are inlaid tracings of silver around the edges of the armor.

The *breastplate of Thrane* is a *+2 breastplate* that also grants its wearer a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, reflecting the legendary courage and dedication of Galifar's son Thrane. In addition, once per day, the wearer can take an immediate action to roll a second saving throw against a mind-affecting spell or ability.

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *good hope.*

Cost to Create: 4,000 gp (plus 350 gp for masterwork breastplate), 320 XP, 8 days.

Crown of Cyre

Price (Item Level): 40,000 gp (17th)
Body Slot: Head
Caster Level: 12th
Aura: Strong; (DC 21) enchantment
Activation: Swift (command)
Weight: —

This fine war helmet incorporates a golden crown formed of overlapping plates resembling the scales of a gold dragon. No gemstones are set into it, but its beauty is striking nonetheless.

As a swift action, you can cause the *crown of Cyre* to project an aura that grants you and your allies within 30 feet a special benefit. You can project one aura at a time, chosen from those below. An aura remains in effect until you use a free action to dismiss it or you activate another aura in its place. You can have an aura active continually; thus, an aura can be in effect at the start of an encounter even before you take your first turn. The crown's aura is dismissed if you become unconscious or are slain, but otherwise it remains in effect even if you are incapable of acting.

Galifar's Might: You and your allies gain a +3 morale bonus on melee damage rolls.

Royal Presence: You and your allies gain a +3 morale bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks.

Cyran Vigor: All of your allies (including you) who are at or below one-half their full normal hit points gain fast healing 3.

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *heroism* or draconic aura class feature (from the dragon shaman$^{\text{PH2}}$ class).

Cost to Create: 20,000 gp, 1,600 XP, 40 days.

Greaves of Aundair

Price (Item Level): 5,000 gp (9th)
Body Slot: Feet
Caster Level: 3rd
Aura: Faint; (DC 16) transmutation
Activation: — and immediate (command)
Weight: 1 lb.

These armored plates fit perfectly over your shins, fastening in the back with black leather straps. Each one is ornamented with the regal silhouette of a dragonhawk.

The *greaves of Aundair* grant you an enhancement bonus to your base speed of +10 feet. Three times per day, you can immediately take a move action. After performing this action, you are dazed until the end of your next turn.

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *longstrider*.

Cost to Create: 2,500 gp, 100 XP, 5 days.

Mantle of Breland

Price (Item Level): 15,000 gp (14th)
Body Slot: Shoulders
Caster Level: 7th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 18) transmutation
Activation: Swift (command)
Weight: 1 lb.

This heavy cloak is made of bulky brown fur, thickest at the shoulders. When you wear it, you look stronger, broader, and somehow fiercer.

Three times per day, you can take on the form of a brown bear (*MM* 269) for up to 7 rounds. You take on all the statistics and special abilities of an average brown bear, except as follows:

- You retain your own alignment.
- You retain your own hit points, but you also gain 20 temporary hit points, which disappear at the end of the effect's duration.
- You are treated as having your normal Hit Dice for the purpose of adjudicating effects based on Hit Dice, such as the *sleep* spell, though you use a bear's base attack bonus, base save bonuses, and all other statistics derived from Hit Dice.
- You retain the ability to understand the languages you understand in your normal form, though you cannot speak.

In all other ways, your normal game statistics are effectively replaced by those of the new form. You lose all of the special abilities you have in your normal form, including your class features.

All of your gear melds into the new form and becomes nonfunctional. When you revert to your true form, any objects previously melded into the bear form reappear in the same location on your body that they previously occupied and are once again functional. Any new items you put on when in bear form fall off and land at your feet.

If you are slain or rendered unconscious when in bear form, the effect ends. Any part of your body that is separated from the whole remains polymorphed until the effect ends.

This is considered a polymorph effect (see *Player's Handbook II* 95–96).

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *polymorph*.

Cost to Create: 7,500 gp, 600 XP, 15 days.

Scepter of Karrnath

Price (Item Level): 20,310 gp (15th)
Body Slot: — (held)
Caster Level: 11th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 20) enchantment
Activation: —
Weight: 15 lb.

This greatclub is made of polished densewood and inlaid with gleaming mithral. The fearsome visage of a howling wolf is etched into the black wood.

The *scepter of Karrnath* is a *+1 domineering greatclub*. The domineering property (described in *Magic Item Compendium*) causes a creature hit by the weapon to become shaken for 1 minute (Will DC 16 negates). This effect doesn't stack with itself or any other fear effects (it can't render a shaken creature frightened).

In addition, when you score a critical hit, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or fall to the ground prone.

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *fear, greater command*.

Cost to Create: 10,000 gp (plus 310 gp for the masterwork densewood greatclub), 800 XP, 20 days.

ITEMS OF LEGACY

An item of legacy is a unique magic item of significant historical or mythological importance that has the capacity to grow in power along with its wielder. The complete rules governing these items appear in *Weapons of Legacy*, but you can still use the items described here if you don't have access to that book.

In order to make use of an item of legacy, you must first uncover the item's history using Knowledge (history), bardic knowledge, or lore checks. An *identify* spell grants a +2 bonus on these checks, while a *legend lore* spell uncovers all the knowledge you need to use the item.

As part of discovering the item's history, you also learn the information you need to perform a ritual tying your destiny to the item's. Most legacy items have three rituals: a least legacy ritual you can perform at or after 5th level, a lesser legacy ritual you must be 11th level to perform, and a greater legacy ritual that requires you to be 17th level or higher. Each ritual has an associated gold piece cost you must pay to complete the attunement process.

In addition to performing the ritual and paying its gp cost, you must pay personal costs to use a legacy item's abilities. These are permanent penalties to attack rolls, saving throws, hit points, and the like.

Once you have uncovered its history, performed the ritual, and paid the personal costs, you have access to the special abilities described for each legacy item in this section. You can use abilities of every level up to your own character level, as long as you have performed the appropriate ritual. The least legacy ritual covers abilities from 5th through 10th level, the lesser ritual covers abilities from 11th through 16th level, and the greater ritual allows you to use the abilities at 17th through 20th level.

When you complete a legacy ritual, that achievement is marked by your gaining a bonus feat—Least Legacy, Lesser Legacy, or Greater Legacy, depending on the type of ritual—that is associated with the item in question (see the Legacy Rituals sections of the following descriptions).

HILLCRUSHER

Though its mystical abilities are difficult to detect, even a casual examination reveals *Hillcrusher* to be an unusual weapon. The haft of this heavy flail is mahogany, rubbed perfectly smooth by hundreds of hands over the centuries. A thin strand of copper wire, clearly newer than the rest of the flail, winds around lower half of the haft, providing extra grip. A brass pommel sits at the back end, carved to resemble a mountain peak with various protruding crags. The chain is bronze and consists of several dozen tiny sculpted hands clutched together. The ball, also bronze, resembles a screaming head of bestial mien, possibly a primitive stone giant.

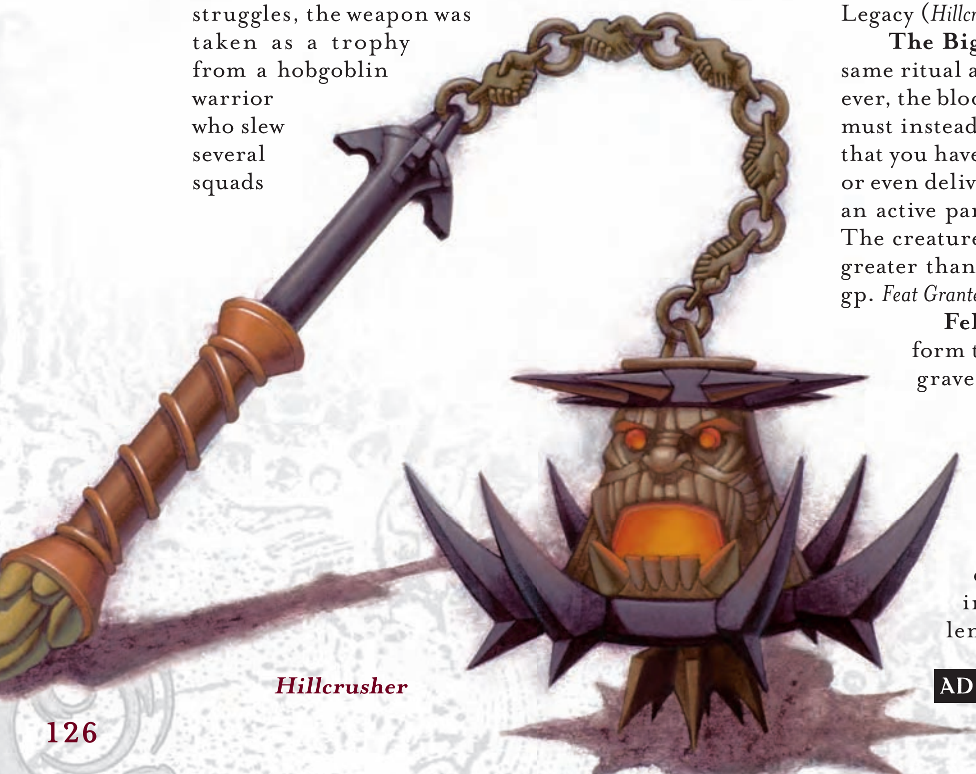
Nonlegacy Game Statistics: *+1 heavy flail;* cost 2,315 gp.

Omen: When a creature of Huge size or larger comes within 120 feet, *Hillcrusher* rumbles faintly, making a sound like that of a distant avalanche.

History

Hillcrusher has been a traditional weapon of Cyran generals since the foundation of Galifar. A truly valuable gift from the Prince of Cyre to his finest general, the weapon has remained a symbol of martial prowess and tactical skill in a nation not widely known for its militant traditions. Although *Hillcrusher* was largely ceremonial throughout most of Cyre's existence, it saw substantial combat and passed through numerous hands during the Last War. Its last known wielder was General Alvos Brillik, who was lost along with an entire regiment near Metrol on the Day of Mourning. (See Brillik's Tomb, page 83.) **(DC 15)**

Galifar and the royal line believed that *Hillcrusher* was an ancestral heirloom, carried with their forebears from Sarlona, and occasionally gifted to favored allies (on the understanding that it would be returned to the Galifar line upon the recipient's death). In truth, however, *Hillcrusher* was discovered on the continent of Khorvaire by some of the earliest refugees from the quori conquest of Sarlona. During the War of the Mark, several dragonmarked house soldiers came into conflict with goblinoids as the humans attempted to move through unclaimed territories. During one of these struggles, the weapon was taken as a trophy from a hobgoblin warrior who slew several squads of troops on his own before he was finally brought down. **(DC 18: No Fear of Death)**



Hillcrusher

The Galifars were not the first family to pass *Hillcrusher* down through the generations. The hobgoblin warrior from whom it was taken, Urkhu Yallak, was in fact the descendant of Shekath Vrim, a chieftain who reigned over much of the Dhakaani Empire millennia before the birth of Galifar. According to the hobgoblin family's history, *Hillcrusher* was forged specifically for them by the hands of a great goblinoid hero, or even a forgotten god. **(DC 22: The Bigger They Are . . .)**

Hillcrusher is not, in fact, of hobgoblin make, and is far older than even the Dhakaani believed. In fact, the flail was forged and enchanted by the drow of Xen'drik during their revolt against the crumbling empire of the giants. Using giant-taught sorceries, they imbued it (and several other weapons like it, according to myth) with great powers and wielded it against their former masters. It was taken from a fallen drow warrior by an elf of a different faction and carried across the sea to Aerenal. From there, it found its way to what would become Valenar with the first elf explorers, and was taken by the Dhakaani during one of the earliest elf–goblin skirmishes. **(DC 27: Fell the Greatest Foe)**

Legacy Rituals

These rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of *Hillcrusher*.

No Fear of Death: You must travel to either the gravesite, or the place of death, of an ancestor who died fighting against impossible odds. You must fast (no food or drink) for 24 hours before approaching the site. Once there, you must remain for an additional 24 hours, meditating on your ancestor's feat and continuing to fast. If you take any nonlethal damage from lack of water, the rite has failed, and you must try again. (See Hunger and Thirst, *DMG* 304). You must, after this time, leave offerings on the site; these account for the cost of the rite. Finally, spill several drops of your blood over *Hillcrusher* and onto the ground (cutting yourself for at least 2 points of damage). *Cost:* 1,500 gp. *Feat Granted:* Least Legacy (*Hillcrusher*).

The Bigger They Are . . .: You must perform the same ritual as described under No Fear of Death. However, the blood you spill at the end must not be yours, but must instead come from a creature of at least Huge size that you have killed. You need not have battled it alone, or even delivered the death blow, but you must have been an active participant in the fight or effort that slew it. The creature must have a Challenge Rating equal to or greater than your effective character level. *Cost:* 13,000 gp. *Feat Granted:* Lesser Legacy (*Hillcrusher*).

Fell the Greatest Foe: Again, you must perform the same fast and ritual over your ancestor's gravesite. In this final rite, however, the blood must come from a creature that committed some great wrong against you or your family. It does not matter how recently the wrong was committed—an ancestral vendetta is acceptable—but it must be severe. A simple inconvenience or feud does not qualify. You must slay this creature in single combat, and it must have a Challenge Rating equal to or greater than your

HILLCRUSHER

Wielder Level	Attack Penalty	Fort Save Penalty	Hit Point Loss	Abilities
5th	—	—	—	—
6th	–1	—	—	*+1 giant bane heavy flail*
7th	—	–1	2	—
8th	—	—	2	*Earthen might*
9th	—	–2	—	—
10th	—	—	2	*Soften earth*
11th	—	—	—	—
12th	–2	—	—	—
13th	—	—	—	*+2 impact* giant bane heavy flail*
14th	—	—	2	—
15th	—	–3	—	—
16th	—	—	2	*Fangs of stone*
17th	—	—	—	*Raise the earth*
18th	–3	—	—	—
19th	—	—	—	*Shake the earth*
20th	—	–4	—	*+4 impact* giant bane heavy flail*

* The impact property (described in *Magic Item Compendium*) functions as the keen property, but for bludgeoning weapons.

effective character level. *Cost:* 40,000 gp. *Feat Granted:* Greater Legacy (*Hillcrusher*).

Wielder Requirements

- Base attack bonus +4
- Constitution 13
- Size Medium or smaller

Most wielders of *Hillcrusher* are martial characters, such as fighters, barbarians, or knights, but less martial characters such as clerics might find the weapon useful.

Legacy Item Abilities

All the following are legacy item abilities of *Hillcrusher*. Each of the weapon's spell-like abilities is activated by striking the earth (or whatever surface you are standing on). Making this strike does not change the time (a standard action, unless noted otherwise) required to activate the ability.

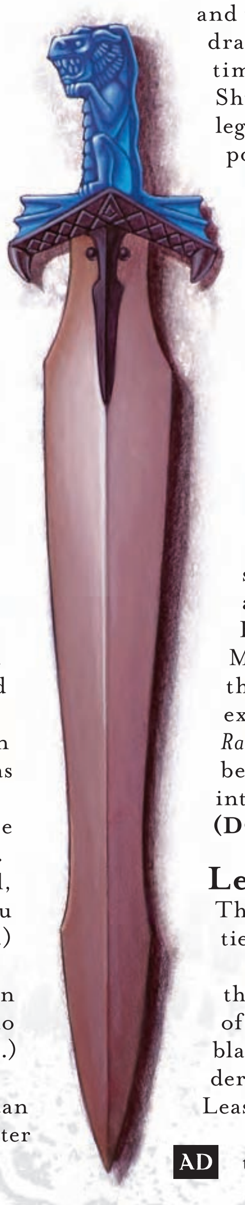
Earthen Might (Sp): At 8th level, you can use *enlarge person* once per day, on yourself only, as a swift action. Caster level 7th.

Soften Earth (Sp): At 10th level, you can use *soften earth and stone* twice per day. Caster level 7th.

Fangs of Stone (Sp): Starting at 16th level, you can use *sudden stalagmite*^{SC} twice per day. (If you do not have *Spell Compendium,* substitute *spike stones*.) Caster level 13th.

Raise the Earth (Sp): At 17th level, you can use *bones of the earth*^{PH2} twice per day. (If you do not have *Player's Handbook II,* substitute *wall of stone*.) Caster level 15th.

Shake the Earth (Sp): At 19th level, you can create an *earthquake*, as the spell, once per day. Caster level 17th.



Ramethene Sword

RAMETHENE SWORD

The Sunderer smote to the dragon's heart,
and its blood formed a river upon the land;
The Fleshrender drew forth the serpent's life
and its blood gave life to the gathered hordes.
For the blade drinks the blood,
and the hand that wields it feasts on the life.
—Serpentes Fragments

The wide, flat blade of this ancient sword is forged of an alloy unknown to modern metallurgy. Its hilt is carved from a single Khyber dragonshard into the likeness of a snarling fiend.

Nonlegacy Game Statistics: *+1 bastard sword;* cost 2,335 gp.

Omen: The voice of the wielder sometimes turns into a tigerlike roar, particularly when the wielder is angry or in combat. The wielder is prone to imagining himself or herself looking like a rakshasa.

History

The *Ramethene Sword* was forged during the Age of Demons and wielded in the million-year war between the dragons and the fiends that ruled Eberron at the time. Its wielder was a mighty rakshasa called Shudra, the Fleshrender, and it acquired its legacy when Shudra used it to slay an incredibly powerful dragon lord. In this battle, it earned its nickname: the Sunderer. **(DC 20; The Blade Drinks the Blood)**

During the Age of Giants, a group of giants devoted to one of the imprisoned rakshasa rajahs built the city of Mel-Aqat above the place where their master was bound, in the midst of the lush jungles of Xen'drik. They placed the *Ramethene Sword* in a shrine in their temple-city, where it was closely bound to the spirit of the Fleshrender. **(DC 25; Spirit of the Fleshrender)**

Near the end of the Last War, a Zil gnome named Corvus Alyre Ramethes published a paper on the history of the Sunderer, and the sword has since been identified with his name, as the *Ramethene Sword.* Shortly thereafter, a Brelish scholar at Morgrave University, Janik Martell, identified the location of Mel-Aqat in the Menechtarun Desert and led a successful expedition to unearth the city and retrieve the *Ramethene Sword.* One member of his expedition betrayed him, however, and delivered the sword into the hands of the Order of the Emerald Claw. **(DC 30; Blood of Betrayal)**

Legacy Rituals

Three rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of the *Ramethene Sword.*

The Blade Drinks the Blood: You must use the sword to deliver the killing blow to a dragon of at least Medium size. You must then bathe the blade in a mixture of the dragon's blood and powdered precious metals. *Cost:* 1,500 gp. *Feat Granted:* Least Legacy (*Ramethene Sword*).

Spirit of the Fleshrender: You must sever the sword's connection to the Fleshrender and bind it to yourself by casting *consecrate* on the blade in a location that is sacred to your beliefs. (Another character can cast the *consecrate* spell, but you must be present.) Once the spell is cast, you must personally anoint it with a special balm created from exotic oils and powdered gemstones. *Cost:* 13,000 gp. *Feat Granted:* Lesser Legacy (*Ramethene Sword*).

Blood of Betrayal: You must use the sword to deliver the killing blow to one of your allies or an NPC whose reaction to you is Helpful. You must then bathe the blade in a mixture made from the blood of your victim and powdered diamonds. This act of murder is unquestionably evil. *Cost:* 40,000 gp. *Feat Granted:* Greater Legacy (*Ramethene Sword*).

Wielder Requirements

- Base attack bonus +4
- Spellcraft 2 ranks
- Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword)

In ancient times, the wielders of the *Ramethene Sword* were rakshasas who used it in battle against their dragon foes. Now, the weapon is useful to anyone who hopes to slay a dragon, but its greatest abilities are useful only to characters who have spellcasting or spell-like abilities.

Legacy Item Abilities

All the following are legacy item abilities of the *Ramethene Sword.*

Dragonfinder (Su): When wielding the *Ramethene Sword,* you can detect any dragon within 60 feet by concentrating as a standard action. You also ignore the damage reduction of any dragon you attack with the sword.

Dragon Smite (Su): Once per day, you can deliver a smite attack upon a dragon. For every size category of the dragon larger than Medium, this attack deals an extra 1d6 points of damage (1d6 against a Large dragon, 2d6 against Huge, 3d6 against Gargantuan, and 4d6 against Colossal). Declare your smite attack as a free action before you make your attack, and no more than once per round. If the attack misses, the smite is wasted.

Resist Dragonbreath (Su): Once per day, you can use *resist energy* as the spell (CL 5th). This ability is triggered freely and automatically when you are subjected to a dragon's breath weapon that uses energy, and it grants resistance to the energy type used by that dragon's breath weapon.

Cloudkill (Sp): Once per day, when you speak a command word and point with the *Ramethene Sword,* you can create a cloud of poisonous fumes, as the *cloudkill* spell (CL 11th). The save DC is 17, or 15 + your Cha modifier, whichever is higher.

Maximize Spell or Spell-Like Ability (Su): You can cast up to three spells per day of up to 3rd level that are maximized as though using the Maximize Spell feat. Alternatively, you can maximize spell-like abilities that duplicate spells of up to 3rd level. Using this legacy ability does not change the spell slot of the altered spell. If you are a spontaneous spellcaster (such as a sorcerer), you must still take a full-round action when using this ability, just as if using a metamagic feat you possessed.

You cannot use this ability if you cannot already cast spells or use spell-like abilities.

Blood Drinker (Su): Against a pinned or helpless foe, you can use the *Ramethene Sword* to drain the target's blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage (instead of the 1 point dealt by the wounding property). When you use this ability, you gain 5 temporary hit points that last for up to 1 hour.

Horrid Wilting (Sp): Once per day, when you speak a command word and point with the *Ramethene Sword,* you can use *horrid wilting,* as the spell. The save DC is 22, or 18 + your Cha modifier, whichever is higher.

THE RAMETHENE SWORD

Wielder Level	Attack Penalty	Will Save Penalty	Hit Point Loss	Abilities
5th	—	—	—	Dragonfinder
6th	–1	—	—	—
7th	—	–1	2	*+1 dragon bane bastard sword*
8th	—	—	2	—
9th	—	–2	—	Dragon smite
10th	—	—	2	Resist dragonbreath
11th	—	—	—	*+2 dragon bane bastard sword*
12th	–2	—	—	—
13th	—	—	—	*Cloudkill*
14th	—	—	2	*+3 dragon bane bastard sword*
15th	—	–3	—	—
16th	—	—	2	Maximize Spell or Spell-Like Ability
17th	—	—	—	*+3 wounding dragon bane bastard sword*
18th	–3	—	—	Souldrinker
19th	—	—	—	—
20th	—	–4	—	*Horrid wilting*

SYLMSARRA'S SHAWL

This gossamer cloak can be worn open from the neck, or fastened to the chest, leaving it free to billow about the legs. When viewed directly, it appears off-white with a pearlescent sheen, but when seen from other angles it subtly shifts through all colors of the spectrum.

Nonlegacy Game Statistics: *Cloak of disguise* (as per *hat of disguise*), cost 1,800 gp. Due to its unusual construction, *Sylmsarra's Shawl* can occupy either the shoulders body slot (when worn open from the neck) or the torso body slot (when worn fastened), as per the wearer's preference.

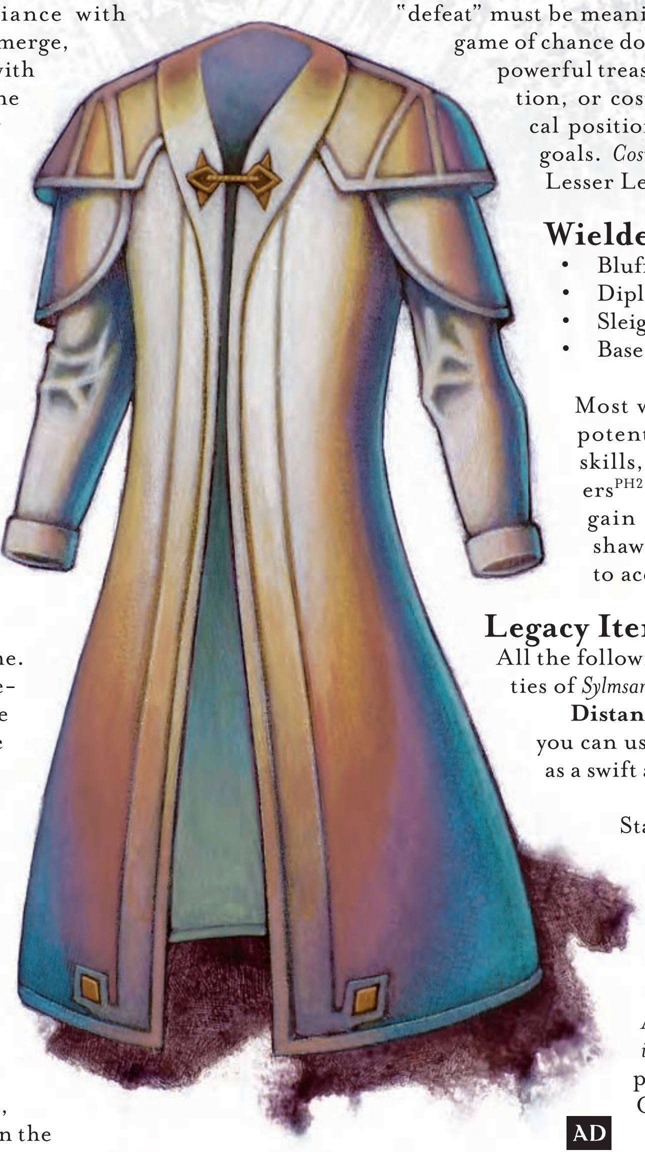
Omen: When the wearer makes use of illusion magic—either through spellcasting or the use of an illusion-based item, including the shawl itself—*Sylmsarra's Shawl* flashes through the colors of the spectrum more brightly than normal, and regardless of viewing angle. This effect is visible only to the wearer.

History

When the gnomes of Zilargo aligned with Breland in 962, they brought with them a great variety of magic items to aid the Brelish war effort, most of which were slanted more toward intelligence and infiltration than they were to direct combat. Of these, one that has been almost forgotten by most histories, was called the *cloak of illusions.* A garment capable of granting its wearer substantial illusory abilities and advantages, it never saw common use, since the gnomes seemed unable or unwilling to create more than the single prototype. It was worn by Tamalra Bieyl, one of the King's Dark Lanterns, and disappeared at the same time she did, during a (presumably failed) intelligence-gathering mission to Thrane in 971. **(DC 18)**

The shawl was created by a gnome named Sylmsarra. She was little known in Zilargo until the gnomes began considering their alliance with Breland. Only then did she emerge, providing the gnomish envoys with her so-called *cloak of illusions*. The gnomes would have been happy to have others, but once the treaty with Breland was signed, Sylmsarra was nowhere to be found. Investigation after the fact revealed no trace of her anywhere; no friends and no relatives could be located. Had it not been for the few months in which she was involved in the Brelish efforts, nobody would ever have known she existed. **(DC 22: Speak with Forked Tongue)**

What almost nobody knows, except for a few who have studied the matter with both in-depth research and divination magic, is that Sylmsarra was not a gnome. Rather, she was a yuan-ti pureblood who resembled a gnome rather than a human. Even the most potent magic and stubborn research have failed to reveal much more about her. Was her gnomelike appearance a coincidence of birth, or did it represent a deliberate yuan-ti effort to pass as races other than human? Why would she create an item so potent, only to give it away—or could its creation have been some sort of accident? Perhaps most important, why did she come to Khorvaire in the first place, and where did she go after she disappeared? **(DC 28: Deception Is the Better Part of Valor)**



Sylmsarra's Shawl

Legacy Rituals

Two rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of *Sylmsarra's Shawl.*

Speak with Forked Tongue: You must acquire 5 ranks (or 5 additional ranks), spread out among the following skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sleight of Hand. You can apply these ranks in any combination, so long as at least 1 rank goes to each skill. These ranks can be taken at any rate you choose, so long as you have them all by 8th level. Once you have obtained these 5 total ranks, you must then use each of these three skills, successfully, against a subject that has a Challenge Rating equal to or higher than your own effective character level. *Cost:* 2,000 gp. *Feat Granted:* Least Legacy (*Sylmsarra's Shawl*).

Deception is the Better Part of Valor: Using only illusions and your own skills—no violence, no other forms of magic or other powers—you must outwit or defeat an enemy that has a Challenge Rating equal to or greater than your own effective character level. This "defeat" must be meaningful; simply winning a game of chance doesn't suffice. Acquiring a powerful treasure or valuable information, or costing the enemy a political position, are more appropriate goals. *Cost:* 14,000 gp. *Feat Granted:* Lesser Legacy (*Sylmsarra's Shawl*).

Wielder Requirements

- Bluff 4 ranks
- Diplomacy 4 ranks
- Sleight of Hand 4 ranks
- Base Will save +5

Most wearers of the shawl are potent in both spell use and skills, such as bards or beguilers[PH2]. Other characters might gain some benefit from the shawl, but they are less likely to access its full potential.

Legacy Item Abilities

All the following are legacy item abilities of *Sylmsarra's Shawl.*

Distant Voices (Sp): At 5th level, you can use *ghost sound* twice per day, as a swift action. Caster level 5th.

Glib and Nimble (Su): Starting at 6th level, you gain a +2 competence bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sleight of Hand checks when wearing *Sylmsarra's Shawl.*

Unseen Stride (Sp): At 8th level, you can use *invisibility* (self only) once per day, as a swift action. Caster level 7th.

Foe's Confusion (Sp): At 10th level, you can use *mirror image* once per day, as a swift action. Caster level 7th.

Flask of Illusion (Su): Starting at 11th level, you can use the shawl to store up to three levels of spells, as a *minor ring of spell storing* (*DMG* 233), but limited to spells of the illusion school only.

Master of Illusion (Su): At 13th level, all illusion spells of 3rd level or lower that you can cast are extended, as with the Extend Spell feat. Using this ability does not change the spell slot of the extended spell. A spontaneous spellcaster (such as a sorcerer) must still take a full-round action when using this ability, just as if using a metamagic feat he possessed.

You can choose not to use this ability when casting a spell (if, for instance, you are a sorcerer who does not wish to take the extra casting time). You cannot use this ability if you cannot already cast illusion spells.

Foe's Frustration (Su): Starting at 16th level, your actual location is difficult to pin down, granting you concealment, as the *blur* spell.

SYLMSARRA'S SHAWL

Wielder Level	Skill Check Penalty	Caster Level Penalty	Skill Point Loss	Spell Slot Loss	Abilities
5th	—	—	—	—	*Distant voices*
6th	—	–1	2	—	Glib and nimble
7th	—	—	—	1st	—
8th	—	—	2	—	*Unseen stride*
9th	—	—	2	—	—
10th	–1	—	—	2nd	*Foe's confusion*
11th	—	—	—	—	Flask of illusion
12th	—	—	2	—	—
13th	—	–2	—	3rd	Master of illusion
14th	—	—	2	—	—
15th	–2	—	—	—	—
16th	—	—	—	4th	Foe's frustration

TEAMWORK BENEFITS

Over time, individuals who band together might devise certain teamwork techniques. To qualify for a teamwork benefit, characters must jointly practice relevant techniques for at least two weeks. This training period must be repeated whenever a new character joins the group. Furthermore, certain conditions must exist—team leader prerequisites must be met by at least one character of the party; team member prerequisites must be held by all members of the party. More information on teamwork benefits can be found in *Dungeon Master's Guide II* (pages 189–194).

COORDINATED AWARENESS

You and your allies have become so skilled at battlefield communication that you can keep track of what's happening around you without splitting your attention.

Training: By training alongside multiple allies, and against flanking foes, you learn to read your enemies' positions in the subtle shifting and movement of your comrades.

Task Leader Prerequisites: Sense Motive 4 ranks, Spot 4 ranks, uncanny dodge.

Team Member Prerequisites: Sense Motive 2 ranks, Spot 2 ranks.

Benefit: If one team member is flanked by foes, but he has at least one other team member adjacent to him, the enemy does not gain the standard +2 bonus on attack rolls due to the flanking (though other flanking-related abilities, such as sneak attack, still function as normal). The team leader need not be one of those adjacent, but he must be within 30 feet.

FLANKING ENHANCEMENT

Your team coordinates its attacks with great precision when surrounding a foe, gaining benefits beyond those of standard flanking maneuvers.

Training: You spend hours gathered in carefully placed groups, coordinating attack after attack against a sparring partner. You focus specifically on taking advantage of openings in his defense caused when he moves to protect himself from one of your allies. You trade off flanking partners at random intervals, so as not to grow too accustomed to the specific patterns and techniques of any one of your allies.

Task Leader Prerequisites: Sense Motive 8 ranks, Spot 8 ranks, uncanny dodge, coordinated awareness teamwork ability.

Team Member Prerequisites: Sense Motive 2 ranks, Spot 2 ranks, coordinated awareness teamwork ability.

Benefit: Your benefits increase based on the number of "flanking pairs" attacking the same foe. If you have two pairs of flankers on a single foe, all of you gain +4 to hit, rather than the standard +2. If you have three or more flanking pairs, the bonus increases to +6.

GROUP ENMITY

Guided by the race-specific training of your group leader, your team takes full advantage of an opponent's weaknesses and habits.

Training: Much of your training involves simply sitting and listening as your companion discusses the tactics, activities, and vital spots of her favored enemy. You take to the practice field often, your companion acting the part of the target creature, but this is only vague preparation for what's to come. Only once you can meet your true enemy on the field of battle, working side by side with your allies, do you truly understand how the tactics you have learned fit together.

Task Leader Prerequisite: Knowledge (as appropriate to the creature type in question) 8 ranks, favored enemy (creature type in question).

Team Member Prerequisite: Knowledge (as appropriate to the creature type in question) 4 ranks.

Special: You must face a member of the creature type in combat as a group at least once before you gain the teamwork benefit. If you go more than six months without facing a creature of that type, you lose the benefit and must face such a creature at least once to regain it.

Benefit: The tactic provides two related benefits. Every member of the team except the task leader gains skill and combat benefits against one of the task leader's favored enemies (see the ranger class feature, *PH* 47). This bonus is equal to half the task leader's bonus. For instance, if the task leader has a +6 bonus against aberrations, the other team members gain a +3 bonus on the same rolls and skill checks.

Second, all team members, including the task leader, gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls made to confirm a critical threat against this creature type.

A specific character can only serve as task leader for one iteration of this teamwork benefit at a time. Thus, if you wish to gain benefits against two types of creature, you must have two party members with favored enemies, even if one of them has multiple favored enemies.

EVADE INCOMING

By following the subtle cues of your most nimble comrade, you have learned to better extricate yourself from area effects.

Training: You and your teammates train by evading area attacks that are essentially harmless, such as clouds of flour. Utilizing a variety of environments, from open fields to rooms crowded with boxes, you learn how best to duck and cover, avoiding any effect that detonates or spreads toward you. Eventually, your practice switches from fake attacks to real ones, dodging *fireballs* and the like.

Task Leader Prerequisites: Tumble 8 ranks, base Reflex save +7, evasion.

Team Member Prerequisites: Tumble 3 ranks, base Reflex save +3.

Benefit: If the task leader and at least one other team member are subject to an area effect that allows a Reflex save, all team members subject to that same effect receive a circumstance bonus on their Reflex saves equal to half the number of team members caught in the effect, minimum 1. For instance, a party of five adventurers, including the task leader, are in the area of a green dragon's breath. Every member of the team gains a +2 circumstance bonus on his or her Reflex save.

With the spell onslaught teamwork benefit, a team of wizards easily cuts through a dusk hag's spell resistance

PRECISION ASSAULT

By carefully observing the impact and effectiveness of your allies' most deadly strikes, you learn how best to hit an enemy where it hurts.

Training: Teaming up many-on-one, you learn to recognize openings in a foe's defense that expose vital areas to attack. You spend many hours at these exercises, watching for the slightest advantage.

Task Leader Prerequisites: Sense Motive 4 ranks, base attack bonus +6.

Team Member Prerequisites: Sense Motive 2 ranks, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: Once any member of the team confirms a critical hit against a foe, every team member's critical threat range on melee attacks against that foe increases by 1. (For instance, a longsword's threat range increases from 19–20 to 18–20.) This bonus stacks with the benefit of the Improved Critical feat or the keen weapon property. If you make even a single attack against a different foe, the bonus disappears until and unless you observe another successful critical hit from a teammate. In either event, the bonuses end when the combat ends, even if you encounter the same foe later.

SHARED MAGIC

Working alongside your spellcasting companions, you have attuned yourselves, physically and spiritually, to their abilities.

Training: The spellcasters on the team cast multiple spells on the entire group, while everyone else empties his or her mind and tries to concentrate on the arcane syllables and gestures.

Task Leader Prerequisite: Spellcraft 8 ranks.

Team Member Prerequisite: Spellcraft 2 ranks.

Benefit: When one member of the team casts a spell that affects a specific number of targets—such as *teleport,* which allows her to bring along a certain number of creatures based on level, or *mass cure light wounds*—the team counts as one person fewer for the purpose of determining who can be affected. For instance, if a sorcerer can normally take three people along on a *teleport,* she could take four with the benefits of this ability. This technique works only if team members are the sole targets of the spell. The caster cannot combine team members and nonmembers and still gain this benefit.

SPELL ONSLAUGHT

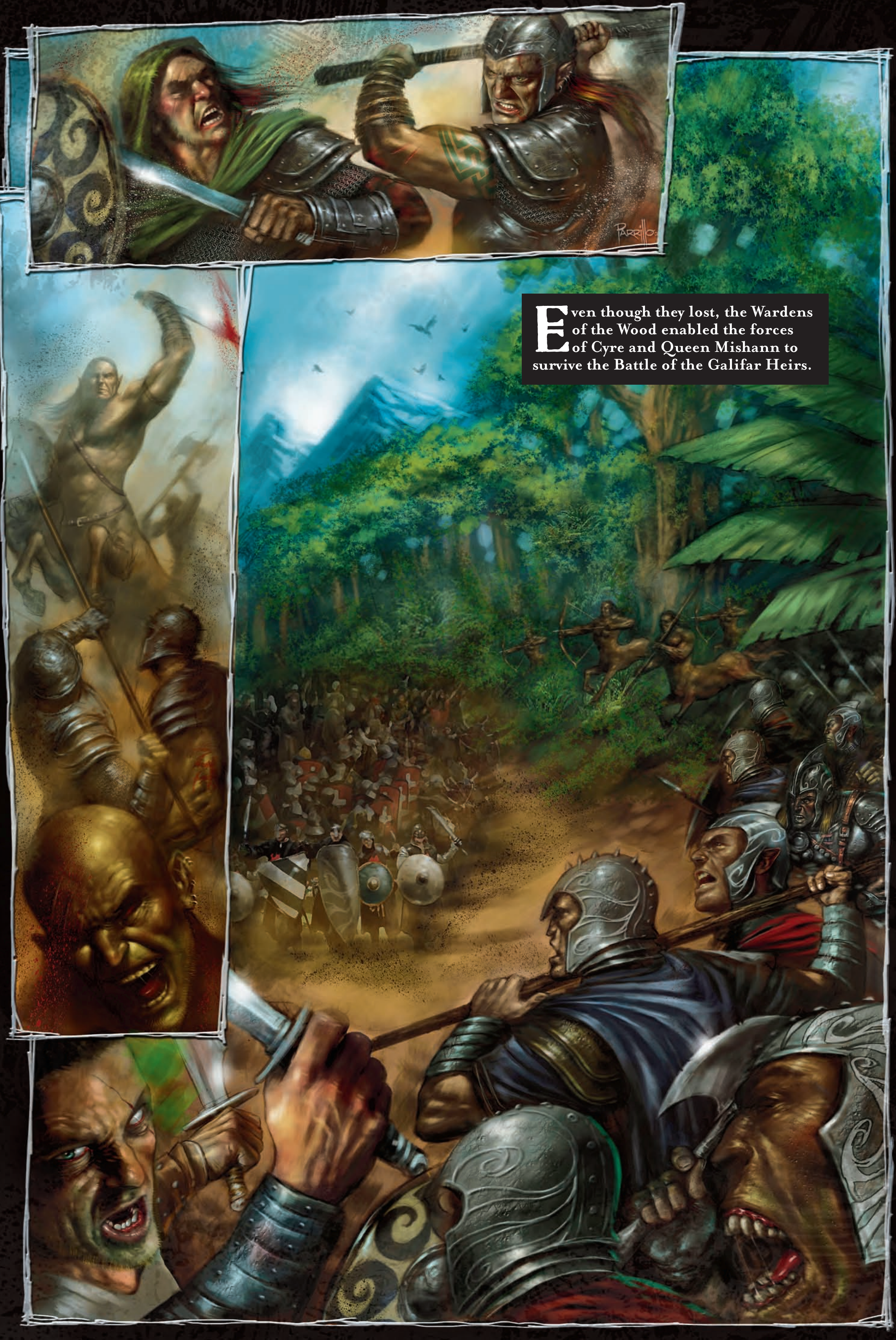
By sending a veritable salvo of spells against a single target, you and your companions are able to whittle down its mystical defenses.

Training: Your training is fairly straightforward: You all prepare to launch your spells at once, while an observer watches by means of spells such as *detect magic* to determine where and how the mystic auras overlap. Only when you can place the spells perfectly are you ready to test the technique in battle.

Task Leader Prerequisite: Spellcraft 7 ranks.

Team Member Prerequisite: Spellcraft 3 ranks.

Benefit: If you and your teammates ready an action to cast offensive spells against the same target at the same instant, you each gain a bonus to overcome its spell resistance. This bonus is equal to 1 + the total number of spells being cast at it (maximum +5). The spells must target the foe specifically—area effects do not qualify—and if a spell requires an attack roll and misses, it does not count for the purpose of this benefit.



Even though they lost, the Wardens of the Wood enabled the forces of Cyre and Queen Mishann to survive the Battle of the Galifar Heirs.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LAST WAR CAMPAIGN

You don't need to start a new campaign to make use of the material in this book.

The default assumption of *The Forge of War* is that you want to use this book in an ongoing EBERRON campaign set after the end of the Last War. To that end, the all the material in the first three chapters is geared toward campaigns set in Eberron's "present day" while also presenting a wealth of historical information. Ultimately, though, in the context of a D&D campaign, history is important only insofar as it's relevant to your game. Why do you need to know who conducted the Second Siege of Eston (page 15), for instance? You don't—unless the PCs in your campaign are exploring the desolate ruins of Eston and they find evidence of an ancient betrayal that launches a new adventure.

All that said, this chapter provides three alternative campaign models, in case you do want to start a new campaign.

- In a historical campaign, all the action takes place during the war. The players might know what's coming (the destruction of Cyre, for example), but the PCs are in the midst of the unfolding drama.
- In a flashback campaign, the players experience occasional sideline adventures into the past, either playing through events in their characters' own past, or taking on new characters who are living through historical events as the present-day characters explore the mysteries of the past.
- The most unusual option is a campaign that actually involves the PCs traveling back in time to relive, witness, or try to change the events of the past.

COOPERATION, NOT COMPETITION

One vital point must be made regarding any of the campaign models discussed in this chapter. These campaigns require a strong element of cooperation between players and Dungeon Master. This doesn't mean the DM should coddle the PCs, or fail to challenge them, nor does it mean the PCs should blithely go along the path of least resistance without coming up with unique or creative solutions to problems, or advancing their own character goals. It does mean, however, that players who deliberately set out to be disruptive can ruin a historical, flashback, or time-travel campaign even more swiftly than they can ruin any other. The PCs might not know how history is "supposed" to turn out in Khorvaire, but the players probably do. A player who sets out to deliberately change events his character shouldn't know about has plenty of opportunities to do so in this campaign, especially if the PCs are involved in major events.

The DM and the players need to agree, in advance, that this isn't the way the campaign is played. Working together, the group can create challenging, fun, and memorable adventures set fully or partly during the war. Without that agreement, it becomes an exercise in frustration.

CAMPAIGN ARC: SECRETS OF DEJARN

This short campaign arc ties elements from many of the entries in this book together to lead the PCs on an investigation from Breland to Throneport, to the borders of Darguun, and finally into the mysterious floating fortress of Dejarn, the only surviving citadel aside from Argonth (see page 45).

The adventures begin in eastern Breland, in the sparsely populated agrarian region between Starilaskur, Vathirond, and Kennrun. Whether they are natives to the area or just passing through, the PCs are enlisted to help deal with a gang of bandits who have been harassing local farmers. As the PCs battle these ruffians, it becomes clear that the bandits are all veteran soldiers—including several warforged—who have evidently turned to crime since the end of the war, lacking any other gainful employment.

After a few skirmishes with the bandits, the PCs discover some papers that suggest more is going on. The bandits are sending the goods they steal to a black market in Throneport, and seem to be receiving shipments of goods in return, though nothing in the bandit camps indicates what these shipments contain.

The PCs can trace the bandit shipments as far as Throneport, but need to negotiate the complex web of allegiances in Throneport to track them further. After the PCs have learned enough to determine the destination of these shipments, they find themselves unable to cross into the Brelish zone of the city to find the implicated merchant—the officers at the crossing claim their papers are forgeries. The PCs must sneak into the Brelish zone to find the guilty merchant, as well as investigating why the Brelish authorities in Throneport seem to have turned against them.

The merchant in Throneport who receives goods from the bandits sends small shipments of precious metals and exotic woods back into Breland. The recipient of these shipments is not one of the bandits, but someone named Kalvan. Evidently, this mysterious figure has some influence in Brelish politics, enough to try to squelch the PCs' investigations in Throneport.

The nature of the goods being shipped back to Breland suggests a connection to House Cannith, and the PCs might find other evidence indicating that Kalvan is a member of that dragonmarked house. (For example, if they helped Merrix d'Cannith on a previous adventure, such as *Shadows of the Last War,* he could help them in this investigation, while a PC with ties to the house might be able to unearth the same information.) Kalvan had a public break with Baron Merrix several years ago, however, and his current location is unknown.

At this point, the PCs learn of new trouble in the region where they had dealt with the bandits: A floating fortress resembling Argonth has been seen near the ruins of Baran's Keep. Investigating these reports, the PCs find evidence of shipments from Throneport being taken aboard this fortress. It is not Argonth, so presumably it is Dejarn, the only other fortress that survived the war.

It is clear that suspicious activity is occurring in one of Breland's mobile fortresses. The characters learn that King Boranel is not behind this activity—in fact, if one of the PCs has ties to the Citadel, that character is ordered to investigate this apparent misuse of Dejarn for illegal purposes. Thus, the PCs have the freedom and authority to infiltrate this fortress—a daunting task, to be sure.

When they get inside, the PCs discover that Kalvan d'Cannith is working with a renegade Brelish noble, Shadra ir'Vanya, on a project to build up Breland's military forces in preparation for a new outbreak of war. Kalvan and Shedra have been working together in Dejarn, which Shadra appropriated through her ties to the Brelish military, to build parts they plan to use to repair Veldarren, the wrecked mobile fortress held by Darguun in Marguul Pass. The PCs must put a stop to this before Kalvan and Shadra attack Darguun, causing a goblinoid reprisal against Breland.

HISTORICAL CAMPAIGN

Though the material in this book is useful for almost any EBERRON campaign, it is perhaps best suited to a game set during the war itself. Depending on how far back from the "present" time you choose to set it, this can either be a fairly minor shift from a standard campaign, or a dramatic change of tone. A game that begins a few months prior to the Treaty of Thronehold, for instance, resembles a traditional campaign far more than it does one that begins a century earlier, but both are Last War campaigns. The following sections provides suggestions and advice for running a campaign set during the Last War, regardless of which stage of the war you choose.

THE BASICS OF A HISTORICAL CAMPAIGN

It might seem obvious, but it's worth examining nonetheless: A Last War campaign should, in some way, involve the PCs in the Last War. It's certainly possible to run a game set during this time that ignores the war completely. The PCs could be adventurers delving ruins far from active battlefields, with no loyalties to any warring faction. They could be based in regions outside the reach of the conflict, such as Xen'drik or Sarlona. Such a campaign could succeed, but if the game doesn't involve the Last War to some extent, there's little purpose in setting it during that time.

That said, don't assume that a Last War campaign must focus on battlefield encounters and clashing armies. War-era Khorvaire provides an immense variety of adventuring opportunity, and the field of battle is only a part of the whole.

Character Allegiances

A Last War campaign likely showcases PCs who hold a common allegiance to a particular faction. The most obvious is a nation, but it could be a dragonmarked house, a guild, a church, a mercenary company, or some other entity (perhaps a news chronicle).

Party allegiance provides an easy way for the PCs to involve themselves in the events of the Last War. Everything about the war is factional. From the struggle of each national leader to become the new ruler of Galifar, to the efforts of the houses to undermine their rivals and profit from the chaos, it's all about the group, not the individual. An allegiance comes with built-in allies, enemies, plot hooks, and adventures. Given the constantly shifting nature of the war, these relationships might not remain the same from session to session. You should carefully consider the party's affiliation when designing adventures and stories, since this factor, more than any other, determines the group's goals and rivals.

Even if the party doesn't have a common allegiance, however, you should ensure that the PCs do not hold opposing loyalties. Although it's possible to run an adventure in which rival soldiers or operatives are forced to work together—and this can even be a great deal of fun, if the players are mature enough not to use it as an excuse to torment one another's characters—it is exceedingly difficult to keep such a group together for the length of a campaign. Most rival operatives would have no reason to work together that long, and might well be tried for treason if they did. It is better, in a historical campaign, for the players and the DM to all work together and develop characters whose goals and allegiances coincide—or at least do not conflict.

Odds are good that even if the PCs don't start off affiliated with a faction, they'll end up that way, if only as a means of acquiring allies against their inevitable foes. Most people they encounter likely assume that they hold loyalty to some nation or faction. Anyone with whom they deal belongs to some faction or other, and they can make enemies simply by selling items or accepting commissions from someone who has a powerful rival.

Choosing a Time Period

The Last War lasted for over a century, so merely saying "This campaign is set during the Last War" doesn't really tell the players much. Before nailing down the date more precisely, consider the following general time frames for the start of the campaign. Be sure to think through the repercussions of your choice on the characters and the adventure. In each case, several PC races are discussed, because attitudes toward them shift throughout the course of the war.

Before the Death of Jarot: A Last War campaign can potentially begin before the start of the war. This allows your PCs to experience firsthand the sense of shattering betrayal or newfound hope, depending on their nation of birth, as the social order collapses—followed swiftly by the sinking realization that this war cannot end any time soon, and that every citizen of Khorvaire might have been swept up in a whirlwind beyond anyone's control.

In these earliest stages, the war is considered primarily a human affair. Other races are involved, but only as citizens of the Five Nations, not as representatives of their own nations. Warforged, of course, do not exist yet.

Early War: During the war's first decades, some of the combatants still clung to the delusion that the conflict could be ended with a single decisive victory. Unusual soldiers, such as undead and mercenaries, took the field in ever-growing numbers. Fringe regions, such as the Talenta Plains, slowly become aware that they cannot remain aloof from the conflict forever.

The dwarves are assumed to be allies of Karrnath, even for the first few years after the Mror Holds declare their independence. Goblins and elves appear in numbers on the battlefield; those who fight them learn to hate them, while those who hire them grow concerned at their reliance on outsiders. Shifters are drawn ever more frequently into the conflict, but memories still linger of the lycanthropic purge. The shapechangers and soldiers of the Silver Flame often refuse to trust one another, even when they ostensibly fight on the same side, and full-blown conflict sometimes erupts between them.

Mid-War: By this time, everyone in Khorvaire is involved in the war to some extent. The positions of the houses are fully cemented, as is their (supposed) neutrality. Forces clash across the Talenta Plains, in the Eldeen Reaches, and other "uninvolved" areas. Various smaller conflicts, such as the hobgoblin revolt and the Valenar annexation of southern Cyre, briefly draw attention from the larger conflict, but lulls in the fighting prove to be temporary.

The gnomes are now firmly aligned with Breland, and—despite their status as suppliers rather than combatants—must now contend with enemy assaults. The dwarves are acknowledged as independent, and each nation deals with its own favored clans. The warforged take the field, but even the most enlightened armies at this time see them as living weapons, not individuals; warforged PCs can expect to be treated poorly by almost everyone. Espionage has become so commonplace that the changelings are universally distrusted as a race. Everyone makes use of them, but nobody likes them, and among the PC races that have become "standard" in a modern campaign, only the warforged face a greater degree of prejudice.

Late War: The war has now raged long enough that few humans can remember a time of peace. Nations running low on personnel and resources institute mandatory military service. Shortages and famines, extant throughout the war, become ever more common. It has now become obvious to all but the most militant zealots that this war cannot be fought to "victory" without destroying everything the nations struggle for, but nobody seems to know how to end it.

Some individual regions and leaders recognize the warforged as more than just inanimate objects. Goblinoids and monstrous humanoids are common enough on the battlefield that although their presence frightens those who cannot stand up to them, they're no longer especially surprising or alien.

Post-Mourning: Cyre has been destroyed, and fear runs rampant across Khorvaire. What caused the Mourning? Will it happen again? While old enmities buttress the new fears, and it is still several years until Thronehold, the war has entered its final stage. For the first time, large numbers of soldiers have hope of outliving the war, and they start to wonder what to do next.

Although the warforged have not been formally recognized as sentient beings, the other races of Khorvaire have more or less reached the states and reputations of the modern era, as defined in the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*.

Adventures and Stories

Most wartime adventures likely come at the behest of some superior, lord, or patron, depending on the party's allegiance, but even those that the PCs undertake of their own accord can tie into the greater conflict. Consider the following as starting points. They represent some of the most fundamental types of wartime adventures, and they provide a wide variety of options while still highlighting the martial nature of the time and the setting.

Battlefield Combat: Perhaps the most basic type of wartime adventure, this is the clash of armies, regiment against regiment, sword against shield. The soldiers might battle for a piece of terrain or a natural resource, to defend a border or to hold supplies, or simply because they happened to stumble across an enemy force.

The PCs are just a handful of soldiers among many. It's a delicate balancing act for the DM to keep the focus on the PCs, while not ignoring the rest of the battle raging around them. Assuming you're not using a mass combat system, the best way to do this is by assigning specific goals for the party to meet, which then influence the outcome of the battle as a whole. For instance, the PCs might be assigned to destroy an enemy siege engine, eliminate an officer or a spellcaster, or scout ahead of the main force to detect ambushes. You can then focus on these smaller events, while describing in passing the larger battle around the characters. For more advice on running a battlefield encounter, see *Heroes of Battle.*

Discovery and Retrieval: Eberron is full of magical secrets and ancient wonders, and the nation that discovers them gains an incredible advantage in the war. Like modern adventurers, many operatives during the Last War delve ancient ruins, explore untouched wilds, and battle fearsome monsters, for the sake of the treasures to be found. Some of these "retrieval specialists" perform random searches, following rumor and folklore, but many are dispatched after specific goals. A divination spell, an ancient text, or a document detailing a family history might suggest the presence of a powerful magic device over which many nations might clash. (If you're looking to create adventures like those experienced by a certain fedora-wearing, whip-wielding archeologist, this is the starting point you want.)

Escort: Ambassadors, officers, shipments of supplies, gold for paying soldiers or mercenaries, encoded messages, recovered relics—all these and more must be transported across the war-torn continent, through hostile territory. Although escort duty might sound boring, to PCs and players alike it provides the opportunity for substantial adventure in numerous different environments.

Espionage and Infiltration: The enemy guards its secrets closely. In stone-walled towers and magically fortified citadels, battle plans, troop movements, research notes, and half-constructed magic weapons await. Possession of those secrets, those plans, or those devices would be enough to turn the tide of the coming conflict, if only the foe's defenses could be penetrated.

That's where the PCs come in. They must pass through enemy lines, then sneak, bluff, or fight their way into the most heavily guarded strongholds, and finally win their way free again, with whatever objective they were sent to retrieve. This kind of mission is often similar to the Discovery and Retrieval starting point, as discussed above, but it more often occurs in urban areas, and it usually involves stealth, deception, and even assassination more than direct combat. (To put it in popular culture terms, if the "discovery and retrieval" example models the action-packed adventures of Indiana Jones, "espionage and infiltration" would be the D&D equivalent of a mission assigned to James Bond or Ethan Hunt.) Organizations such as the King's Citadel in Breland are perfect patrons for adventurers on this sort of quest.

Guard Duty and Patrols: Someone has to maintain the borders, stand guard atop the walls of the keeps and fortresses, and protect cities from invasion. As the saying goes (more or less), offense gets the glory, but defense wins the war. An adventure that forces the PCs to remain in one area, defending against attack at the enemy's convenience, might seem restrictive at first, but savvy players should soon come to see the opportunities and the trials involved in such an endeavor. The chance to organize those defenses as they see fit; to be the ones setting the traps and the ambushes, rather than springing them; to see what creative use they can make of the terrain and available supplies—all these opportunities should appeal to imaginative players as new forms of challenge, and the chance to experience an adventure from the "other side."

War? What War?: It's entirely possible to run a Last War campaign in which the PCs are not directly involved in the war effort at all.

But wait. Didn't we, just a short while ago, suggest that a Last War campaign should always involve the war? Indeed, but consider that the war can impact an adventure even when the PCs have no direct connection to a warring faction, and their objectives are not remotely tied to the ongoing conflict. The PCs might be hired by a private interest to retrieve a family heirloom from an occupied area. They might seek personal vengeance against a military officer for some crime against a friend or hometown, requiring them to catch him when he is away from his soldiers. They might simply be everyday adventurers, seeking great treasures, for which they must compete with government-sanctioned treasure-hunters, or which they might attempt to sell to the highest-bidding warring party. The party could even be fugitives, hiding from law enforcement or military justice, trying constantly to find an area safe from the inexorably advancing armies.

MAKING HISTORY

Perhaps the biggest decision you must make as a DM is to what extent you are willing to let the events of the campaign alter the history of Eberron. The "modern day" situation as set forth in the *EBERRON Campaign Setting* obviously assumes a great deal regarding the way the Last War turned out and what happened afterward. There is no reason you can't change some or all of those assumptions in your own campaign, but there's a substantial amount of work involved in determining how such changes would impact the world thereafter. Decide in advance if you're prepared to do that work, and in what general direction you'd like the changes to lead—subject to the specific actions of the PCs, of course. In most cases, it's probably better (or at least easier) if you design the adventures so that PC success leads to the "right" course of history, and that most changes are in the details, rather than in grand-scope events. King Kaius is destroyed, but his successor still leads Karrnath into the signing of Thronehold. Aundair drives the forces of Thrane out of Thaliost, thanks to the PCs—but political wrangling at Thronehold still grants that land to Thrane after the war.

You can, of course, decide to go whole hog, allowing any and all changes as they occur. The Blood of Vol becomes the dominant faith of Karrnath. The Mourning obliterates Thrane rather than Cyre. Aundair wins the Last War. All of these conclusions might be possible, if you give your PCs a great enough degree of influence. Redesigning the world to fit thee new circumstances can be an interesting exercise, and make for a fascinating campaign, but it goes well beyond the scope of this book.

Remember, as well, that although your players know how history is "supposed" to turn out, their characters do not—and don't hesitate to remind the players of this fact.

PC Influence

In a historical campaign, there are roughly three "degrees" of party influence on, and interaction with, the major events of history.

A View from the Trenches: The overwhelming majority of soldiers in the war, of battles and skirmishes, had no direct bearing on the Last War's outcome. Most of those who lifted blade or bow were common folk or soldiers who never truly understood the magnitude of the conflict. Cities were conquered and liberated, borders shifted, leaders slain and replaced. Although the cumulative effect of all these factors led to the resolution of the war, few individual events were vital to the flow of history.

In this sort of campaign, the PCs are among the faceless masses that fought and died throughout the war. This doesn't mean that their accomplishments are meaningless. They might save a village from destruction, turn the tide of a battle in favor of their home nation, or retrieve a fabulous artifact before an enemy can acquire it. Simply ensuring their continued survival, and that of

Even if they only served as common soldiers in the Last War, the PCs can make a difference

their comrades in arms, might well be victory enough. Still, their adventures are local, contained, with little impact on the overall course of the war. They are among those common folk—even if they themselves are more than common—caught up in events larger than they can fathom. This sort of campaign allows the players to experience the rigors and challenges of life on the battlefield or in the war-weary cities. It is perfect for DMs who prefer a campaign that is less world-altering, and it allows the PCs the maximum degree of freedom without having them make a major impact on Khorvairian history.

Behind the Scenes: This can be among the most difficult, but also the most rewarding, types of Last War campaign. In this approach, the PCs are heavily involved in one or more of the major events of history, but not obviously so. They might be assigned to (or simply embark upon) secret objectives that nudge the events of the war in the direction history records. Perhaps the PCs are a cadre of Cyran intelligence operatives who receive word of the impending betrayal at Thronehold, and they must rush to delay some of the Karrnathi and Thrane regiments, allowing Queen Mishann the opportunity to escape. They might have enabled the mobile fortress Chydris to win the Second Battle of Lurching Tower by preventing Thrane operatives from making off with its schematics in prior weeks. They might have been the assassins of King Kaius II, or even been involved directly in the Day of Mourning.

It's possible for a skilled DM to involve the PCs behind the scenes in major historical events without the players, at first, being aware of it. A simple ambush of a supply train might prove, in retrospect, to be the final blow responsible for the fall of Fort Light in 971. The rescue of a band of gnomes menaced by bloodthirsty mercenaries might be the final gesture that convinces them to ally with Breland, rather than sitting out the war.

This sort of campaign allows the players to have a taste of true historical significance, without putting them front-and-center, and with only a moderate chance of the DM having to scramble to "correct" any events that run counter to history as written.

Movers and Shakers: The PCs aren't just involved in some of the war's greatest events, they're right in the thick of them. The players might portray some of a nation's greatest generals, leading entire armies into combat. They might be the circle of advisors to King Boranel, or ambassadors to Thronehold. They are major participants in some of the greatest battles discussed in Chapter One, or emissaries responsible for bringing the Darguuls into the war on behalf of House Deneith. Everything they do is big, and their names are recorded in the *Korranberg Chronicle* and in history books yet to be written.

This can be the most immediately gratifying of the campaign types discussed here, because it allows the PCs to leap into the heart of the Last War, but it also requires the most flexibility on the part of the DM. Unless every adventure goes perfectly according to expectations—and really, how often does that happen?—it's all but guaranteed that something will happen to change the face of history in Eberron. Even if you're willing to smooth over those changes and have things turn out more or less the same, it still requires a bit of work, and the ability to ad lib a lot of material on the spur of the moment. A single major change early in the war can alter every event to follow if you don't take steps to prevent it. By the same token, if you try too hard to prevent changes to history, this can make the players feel like their efforts are meaningless, so you might have to allow certain alterations despite your best intentions.

THE DAY OF MOURNING

The Last War offers a number of major historical events the characters might experience over the course of the campaign, but no single event had as great an impact on the war, or on Khorvaire itself, as the Mourning.

If your historical campaign is set substantially before the destruction of Cyre, or after it, the Mourning is not something to which you need to devote substantial thought. You might, however, consider a campaign set immediately before the Mourning, thus making use of that event as an adventure seed or part of an ongoing plot.

The party need not be anywhere near Cyre for the Mourning to impact the campaign. The event shook every nation of Khorvaire to the core, shifting the course of the war. Governments dispatched operatives and made use of numerous spells trying to discover the cause of the Mourning. Some immediately sought a cessation in hostilities, while others redoubled their efforts against an enemy they were convinced was responsible. Cyran fugitives struggled to survive. Horribly mutated monsters poured out of the gray mists. Vital trade routes were disrupted, leading to supply shortages. The Day of Mourning can provide the basis for numerous adventures, even an entire campaign, without the PCs experiencing the catastrophe itself, and even a Last War campaign that doesn't focus on the Mourning should be drastically changed once that event occurs.

For a real challenge—not only for the PCs, but for yourself as well—you might consider an adventure that involves the Mourning directly. This might be a survival scenario. The PCs are deep in Cyre when the event occurs, and they must endure the sudden influx of corrupting magic and the hordes of horrors it leaves in its wake. Or they might enter the Mournland voluntarily, within days or even hours of its creation, in hopes of rescuing lost comrades or retrieving vital supplies caught within. You might pit them in a race against time, as they struggle to evacuate a Cyran border community before the spreading gray mist reaches them.

Alternatively, you can choose to make the PCs major players in the events leading up to the Mourning. They might learn in advance that something terrible is about to happen, though they presumably don't know its full extent, and then take what steps they can to stop it, or at least to evacuate certain important people before it hits. For a truly gut-wrenching twist, consider making the PCs partly responsible for the Day of Mourning. Maybe they accidentally unleash something while exploring an abandoned or haunted House Cannith installation, or they manage to destroy a doomsday weapon created by a Khyber cult—although they save the world, the fallout results in the destruction of Cyre. Be certain your players are the type to appreciate the story and character development that comes with this sort of appalling revelation. The characters should be horrified, but if the players are going to be truly upset, or feel excessively manipulated, you should avoid putting them in this position.

To make this approach work, you should have some idea of what caused the Day of Mourning. You need not come up with every last detail—in fact, if your players are to be involved, it's best that you don't—but you'll need to know the basics. Even if your characters never find out the truth behind the Mourning, the knowledge you have will help you decide what sort of adventures they undertake and how their actions affect larger events. Don't worry about trying to figure out the "official" cause of the Mourning; just determine what works best for your purposes and your campaign, and make it happen.

HISTORY AS A SIDELINE

You might wish to run a few historical adventures set during the Last War as a sideline from a standard EBERRON campaign, rather than as the focus of the campaign itself. This technique is particularly useful for granting the players additional insight into historical events that could be impacting the adventures their "normal" characters are undertaking. For instance, if the PCs are researching a particular battle, you might devote a few sessions to actually playing that battle out with historical characters, rather than simply telling the players what their characters learned.

For more on this sort of campaign, see the Flashback Campaign section.

CAMPAIGN ARC: UNSUNG HEROES

In this campaign arc, the player characters are among the early champions of the doomed nation of Cyre, arguably the greatest victim of the Last War. The Day of Mourning is more than a century away, and the efforts of the PCs might prove vital to the survival of the culture and political ambitions of their homeland. (Read over the various early battles and encounters described in Chapter One if you wish to make use of this campaign arc, since that material makes frequent references to those events.)

The campaign begins prior to Queen Mishann's journey to Thronehold, as the entirety of Galifar mourns King Jarot. The PCs, soldiers in Cyre's capital regiment, stand guard over the various ceremonies, prayers, and speeches given in honor of the departed king, and the coming ascension of Cyre's leader to the throne. In the process, the party discovers what at first seems to be a simple criminal conspiracy to take advantage of the public spectacle to rob several of Metrol's richest nobles. Further investigation and encounters with the conspirators reveals that the operation is, itself, intended to cover and pay for nothing less than the assassination of Mishann. Racing against time, the characters (presumably) succeed in stopping the assassin at the last moment. Though they never learn precisely who arranged the attempt on the queen's life, the discovery days later that Kaius, Thalin, and Wroann refuse to recognize Mishann's right of succession certainly suggests a motive.

As Queen Mishann and her escort depart for Thronehold, she requests that the PCs continue in their efforts to backtrack the assassin. In the process, they come under the command of Cyre's other nobles, their first exposure to the backstabbing circles of political power. Eventually, they uncover the fact that one of Mishann's advisors is a traitor, bribed to provide the assassin access to the royal quarters. From him, they learn that the armies of Thrane and Breland are marching to intercept Mishann at Thronehold. Only if the PCs can reach King Wrogar of Aundair, Mishann's only ally, do they stand any chance of protecting their queen. This mission requires a journey across the continent, beset both by the hazards of the wild and agents of the opposing nations who seek to stop any of Cyre's messengers from reaching Aundair.

Again assuming they succeed, the PCs travel with the Wardens of the Wood, arriving in time to participate in the Battle of the Galifar Heirs. Although the battle is ultimately lost, the presence of the Wardens prevents Mishann and her forces from being overrun.

Since they have now saved her life twice, Mishann promotes (or even knights) the PCs, and they aid her withdrawal to Eston. The PCs remain in Eston from 895 to 896, aiding in its defense against the forces of Breland, Karrnath, and Thrane, but frequently sallying forth in secret to deliver messages to Cyran forces, sabotage enemy efforts, and acquire supplies and magic for the city's inhabitants and defenders. Once the siege breaks, the PCs are asked to lead some of the forces responsible for harrying the Karrnathi cavalry.

For several years the PCs function as special operatives in the Cyran military, standing on the field of battle but also making espionage and sabotage raids into enemy nations, particularly Karrnath. When Eston is besieged again in 903, the PCs make several runs to supply the beleaguered city.

When Mishann finally decides it is time to bolster her own forces with Valenar mercenaries, the PCs are among the envoys she sends to deal with the martial elves. The PCs must not only face the various hazards of the journey, but contend with emissaries from other nations to prove their worth to the Valenar, competing in multiple duels and games of war against both the Valenar themselves and rival champions.

Before the PCs can return to Cyre, Mishann is assassinated by operatives of the Emerald Claw. Though they return too late to protect their sovereign, the characters learn that her son, Brusst, is currently being hunted by his mother's killers. The PCs must find him first, unsure of who might be a hidden Claw agent, and protect him from a ruthless and almost invisible enemy. When Brusst assumes the throne, the PCs are not only his trusted protectors but also among the most powerful and experienced of Cyre's agents. Brusst requests that they become his inner circle of advisors, much to the chagrin of other Cyran nobles. From this point on, the PCs have substantial control over the Cyran war effort—at least when they aren't jockeying for political power with other nobles and generals. Their efforts and their decisions will shape the state of Cyre for decades to come.

Flashback Campaign

While a historical campaign takes place entirely during the Last War, the events of a flashback campaign occur mostly in the "standard" period of modern Eberron. Only select portions of the campaign occur during the Last War. Whether to provide the players a greater and more immediate insight into certain important events, or because the adventures require that certain things happen in both time periods, a flashback campaign allows the PCs to experience the war for themselves.

THE BASICS OF A FLASHBACK CAMPAIGN

The DM and the players alike have a bit of extra work ahead of them in order for a flashback campaign to work. Players must create two characters, one for each time period, while the DM must create plotlines—or at least individual events and adventures—that occur many years, and possibly many miles, apart from one another.

Take a look back at the section on DM and player cooperation (page 133). This attitude is, if anything, even more vital to a flashback campaign than to a purely historical one. Again, this doesn't mean you shouldn't challenge the PCs, or that you should discourage creative decisions and solutions to problems, merely that you should be wary—a player who sets out to be deliberately disruptive can derail an adventure, or even the entire campaign.

Characters

As the players sit down to create characters, remind them to consider what sorts of links their characters share. Not all flashback characters need to have direct or blatant connections to the group's standard characters, but most should, at least, have some thematic ties. This helps associate the events and the actions of the two disparate time periods in the players' minds, as well as reinforcing the notion that both groups are involved in the same overarching adventure, even if neither group is aware of the other in-character. It's certainly possible to play two groups of adventures that have no links or connections to each other, other than the fact that both are involved in the campaign, but doing this lessens some of the sense of connection and immediacy.

Direct Links: These are the more obvious and tangible links between characters. They include such notions as playing a character's great-great-grandmother during the flashbacks, portraying a character's aged mentor when he was a young man, or even taking the role of a legendary figure in the past whom one of the modern characters looks up to as a hero and icon. These direct linkages can make the players feel more strongly about both sets of characters than they would otherwise, but it also could stretch the bounds of believability to have two entire parties linked in this manner. It's probably best if only one or two characters have such direct links, with the other characters sharing only thematic links (see below) with their precursors.

Bear in mind that the same player need not portray both of a pair of linked characters. It might be interesting, for instance, for one player to portray the ancestor of another player's character.

Thematic Links: Somewhat more abstract than direct links, these nevertheless are sufficient to provide the players a sense of connection between the two groups of characters. Thematic links include allegiances, such as each party containing a loyal follower of the Silver Flame, or serving the nation of Aundair; characters with similar backgrounds and goals, such as a warrior seeking vengeance for the destruction of his home or the slaughter of his family; or even more abstract connections, such as each group containing a single member of an uncommon race who feels outcast and alone.

Previous Characters: A subset of thematic links, this approach works only if you've previously run a campaign set primarily during the Last War. In this case, you can use the flashbacks as a means of revisiting some old characters in the midst of an otherwise new campaign. The players might not need any further links between characters; the chance to reconnect with some old favorites might be enough to establish the necessary sense of involvement and immediacy. Of course, if they also want to develop some additional links, such as playing a descendant of an old character in the modern group, so much the better.

Adventures and Stories

For a flashback campaign to really work to its full potential, there must be reasons for revisiting the Last War. You certainly could run a campaign in which you simply offer occasional adventures set during the war that have little if any connection to the main campaign, purely as a break from the norm, but this is less of a true flashback campaign than two campaigns—one standard, one historical—running concurrently.

Designing an adventure that incorporates events set in both the present and the past could seem like a complicated venture, but with some forethought, it's much easier than it might look. Many campaigns already do this, even if the DMs themselves don't realize it. The PCs must research ancient knowledge, or unearth a magic artifact lost in bygone days. The only difference is that, in a flashback campaign, the PCs don't just learn about these events as the DM describes what they read in a tome—they play through them in their entirety.

What follows are various scenarios and situations in which a flashback would be appropriate, to help you in designing your adventures.

Character Motivations: Flashbacks are an excellent means of revealing why an NPC acts as she does today. If, for instance, the PCs in the modern era are dealing with a rogue Karrnathi general who has conspired with the Emerald Claw, a series of flashbacks that shows his defeats in battle and his shift from loyal Karrn to bloodthirsty conspirator might be appropriate.

This sort of flashback can explain the origin of personal or family vendettas, or even acts of treason and similar crimes that an NPC commits in one time period and must pay for in another. You might use the opportunity to shift an ally in one time frame to an enemy in another, or vice versa. If the flashback characters are indirectly responsible for this shift, leaving the modern characters to deal with the repercussions, so much the better.

Heirlooms, Treasures, and Legacies: Rather than following the history of a character or the events of a region, consider using flashbacks to tell the tale of a magic item or other mysterious object. Perhaps one of the PCs carries an heirloom sword, a weapon wielded by generations of warriors before him. You might use flashbacks to show other events in which that weapon was involved, particularly if the sword has a history or powers the PCs have not yet discovered. (This is an excellent way of introducing weapons of legacy, if you include them in your campaign.)

Alternatively, the PCs in the modern era could be searching for a great item—a weapon, a religious relic, a special airship, or the like—that the party in the Last War used. This enables the modern PCs to learn about its abilities, and allows the players to see it in action, long before their "real" characters ever get hold of it. You might even use the actions of the flashback party to eventually reveal the item's location to the modern party. (For a particularly interesting twist, put the flashback characters in a position where they must hide the item in a location where it will be exceedingly difficult to recover—and then require the modern party to recover it. So long as your players are capable of separating in-character and out-of-character desires, this can be a great deal of fun as the players essentially determine the nature of their next adventure.)

Finally, consider a situation in which both groups are hunting for the same item in two different periods

SURPRISE FLASHBACKS

Usually, you'll want to tell your players in advance that you're running a campaign that involves flashbacks to the Last War, so that they can create two sets of appropriate characters. If you have a group of players who you believe will appreciate the surprise and the challenges involved, however, you might consider springing it on them without warning. This tactic works best if the players have old characters from a prior Last War campaign; few players object to the chance to revisit old characters.

Alternatively, you can supply premade characters for the purpose of the flashback. This is a tricky proposition, though, because most players never connect as well with characters they didn't create. This approach works best, then, for a campaign that involves only a single flashback around which a vital adventure or plot point revolves, as opposed to one that features multiple flashbacks throughout the campaign.

In either case, a surprise flashback can ramp up the excitement level, as the players are faced with a new and unique form of adventure experience they weren't expecting. It obviously works only once, even if the campaign involves multiple flashbacks to follow, but for the right group, it can be the best way to introduce the concept.

of history. The flashback PCs might fail to find it, but their efforts give the modern characters clues about where to go—or at least tell them where not to look. Alternatively, the flashback party might find the item, but this might not help the modern party as much as it sounds, since the older group doubtless moves the item it from its original location.

Hidden Knowledge: Perhaps the most common inspiration for a flashback is when the modern characters need some information buried in the past. Perhaps this information is the location of a great item, as suggested above, or facts about the specific details of a battle. The modern PCs might wonder what really happened at the Battle of the Galifar Heirs, or they might need to know what secret a legendary hero took to his grave. Whether through research, divination, or some other method, they can learn this information—but it's far more interesting to play through the events as their own adventure, rather than simply tell the players what their characters have discovered. With some amount of planning, you can run several flashback sessions that do not seem to have any bearing on the modern campaign. Only after several such sessions do the flashback characters discover something that obviously relates to what the modern characters are trying to accomplish.

STYLES OF FLASHBACK

Once you've determined why to incorporate flashback adventures into your campaign, the next step is determining how. A number of methods suggest themselves, and you need not limit yourself to just one in a given campaign. The first flashback might be unconnected to the modern group, designed just to let the players get a handle on portraying two parties, while the second comes from a historical treatise one of the characters is perusing in a library. Use whatever method fits best into the current events of the campaign, or create your own.

Divination

Certain divination spells, such as *legend lore* or *vision*, can provide the caster with substantial information about an individual or topic. The players can take over the roles of the individuals about whom the PCs are learning by way of the spell.

This is a little trickier than the other flashback methods described below. It puts the timing of the flashback scenarios at least partly in the hands of the players. The DM can decide when the PCs locate a particular historical treatise, for instance, but it is the players who choose when to cast their characters' spells. You won't be able to anticipate every use of these spells, but depending on the current adventure and the party's goals, you can likely predict those that are most relevant to ongoing plots. If you're caught by surprise, you can either wing it (if you're good at that) or simply express the results normally; not every use of these spells needs to result in a flashback, even in a flashback campaign.

Dreams

Even in a world where magic is commonplace, it need not always be predictable or easily understood. Dreams that represent messages from the gods or memories of past lives are common themes in myth and fantasy, and they need not be any less so in an EBERRON campaign. Using this model, vital knowledge comes to one or more of the PCs in a dream—and that dream itself forms the framework of the flashback adventure.

The best recipient for a flashback dream is a PC who has strong religious or magical leanings. A cleric is the best choice, because the character can decide for herself if she believes the dreams are divine messages or come from some other source. Alternatively, to drive home the supernatural nature of the dream, you might decide that all the PCs experience the same thing.

You need not explain initially why the PCs are having these dreams. Although the players presumably know that the campaign involves flashbacks, the characters might not understand the connections, at least at first. They know that they're seeing these images of someone else's adventures, and the players know they're portraying two groups of characters, but it might be some time, and several dreams, before the connections between the two plotlines become apparent.

Historical Records

Many adventures require the heroes to research past events or legends. Although the most obvious vehicle is that of a musty old tome in an ancient library, it could also include tales told in murals or stained glass, runic tablets, or even religious texts.

The tales in historical tomes provide an excellent segue into a flashback adventure

Whatever the case, as the modern PCs begin to peruse the written word, you can then shift the action over to the flashback characters, as they play out the events about which the later group is reading.

This method might shake the players' sense of verisimilitude if you aren't careful. After all, in playing through the events, they are likely to experience details and make comments that are unlikely to be recorded in any historical treatise later written about the subject. So long as you make it clear to your players, however, that the modern PCs are reading only the salient details, and not necessarily every last bit of minutiae the flashback party experiences, the situation should remain believable.

Oral Tales

Similar to the prior entry, this flashback occurs as the modern PCs hear the story of their precursors, perhaps told to them by a bard in a tavern, a sage in a dusty, darkened shop, or the old high priest who was a mere acolyte when these events occurred. As with written histories, the players should assume that their modern characters aren't necessarily hearing about every little detail their flashback characters play through, and they might even interpret a few points incorrectly, but the core of the story is exactly as their flashback PCs experience it.

Unconnected

Though this is only rarely the best method to choose, consider the possibilities inherent in a "flashback" that has no connection to the modern PCs. They have not read a tome; they receive no mystical dreams. Instead, the flashback is simply an adventure that occurs during the Last War, involving a group of characters that might or might not have any link to the modern PCs.

This technique is useful only if you want your players to have some insight into past events that you do not want their characters to share. You might want your players to understand why someone took the time to build an intricate tomb full of traps and riddles, even if their characters never know, just so the information doesn't feel forced or out of place. You might believe that the players will feel more of a sense of immediacy if they've seen the war crimes committed by the NPC their modern PCs are pursuing, even if their characters know nothing of it. Or you might simply want your players to really have a sense of what life was like during the war, as contrasted to the years immediately after.

If you intend to have more than one or two flashbacks, we recommend you select one of the other options and tie the events more directly into the ongoing adventures. For a one-time experience, however, this method works well enough.

MEMORIES OF WAR

One other possible flashback technique is the use of actual memories. The players aren't portraying two different groups of characters; they're playing the same characters at two different points in their lives.

In this model, the players each create a character at low level and one at mid to high level, the first one representing the PC during the Last War and the other in the modern era. Most of the campaign takes place in modern Eberron, but when you want to introduce a villain or a concept the PCs first encountered during the war, shift the setting back several years and allow the players to play through it, building the events that their characters are "remembering."

This can be an exceptionally rewarding exercise, because it allows players to experience multiple elements and angles in their characters' development and lives. It does, however, have difficulties and hurdles far in excess of any other flashback model.

The first, of course, is that if a disruptive player can ruin a historical or nonmemory flashback campaign, he can absolutely destroy one based on recollections. Players must acknowledge from the get-go that they're trying to build a coherent character history. Anyone who sets out to deliberately make choices in the past for the sole purpose of making the "known future" impossible will almost certainly succeed. Don't lead the PCs around by the nose, and don't make their decisions meaningless; just make it clear that, when it comes to personal character development and party history, they should try to keep their past characters moving in the proper direction to wind up as their modern one.

Perhaps the biggest hurdles are major character-changing events such as death, experience points, and the acquisition of magic items. If the players are cooperating, you won't have a problem with them building their characters in directions other than where they have "already" wound up, but what happens if the flashback group "catches up" with the modern one? To prevent this, you need merely make certain to set the two groups apart by more than a few levels. If it happens anyway, though, simply start awarding any additional experience points earned by the past group to the modern one.

Death and magic items are more difficult to handle. *Resurrection* is always possible, but what if a character dies in such a way that the party cannot bring her back? How do you deal with a magic item you've mistakenly allowed the characters to acquire in the past, but they no longer have in the modern day? Although you should know more or less what items the PCs have in the modern era, and can give them appropriate magic in the past, everyone's human, and you might make a mistake eventually.

In both cases, you've got two options. One, simply hand-wave it, telling the PCs that at some point between the two time periods, the character was *raised* or the item was stolen/broken/used up/whatever. Or, perhaps the more satisfying option is to work the "correcting" events into a future flashback story. Allow the players to see how and why the character came back against all odds, or how their precious item was lost.

Make no mistake: All this is a lot of work and not to every group's or every DM's taste. If you're willing to put the time and effort into it, however, this could be the most intriguing form of flashback campaign to be played.

BUILDING MODERN CHARACTERS ON PAST EVENTS

It's easy enough to keep the advancement of flashback characters and modern characters completely separate. Each group earns XP and other rewards based on its actions, and gains levels accordingly.

Although it's simple, however, it might not be entirely satisfying to all players. In most flashback campaigns, the bulk of the time is spent in modern Eberron. Players might understandably consider their modern characters to be their "real" characters, with the flashbacks providing an interesting diversion. Additionally, the line between XP as character rewards and as player rewards is a bit muddy, and some players (and DMs) might think that although the flashbacks are fun, the end result deprives the modern characters of advancement they might otherwise have achieved.

If you'd like to see the modern PCs gain some reward out of the flashbacks, above and beyond the knowledge obtained, consider making use of one of the following options. (Combining both options is not recommended.)

Split Experience

When granting XP to the flashback group, award them only 75% of what they would normally receive according to the various challenges they've faced. The remaining 25% percent instead goes to the modern characters. This benefit allows the modern characters to continue some modicum of advancement during games that focus on the flashback characters, and can represent the various things they've learned while reading about or otherwise experiencing the effects of the actions of the earlier party.

Experience as Currency

The flashback party receives 75% normal experience, and the modern party receives the same amount of experience points. The modern party does not, however, receive these points as actual XP; that is, they cannot use them for level advancement. Instead, they gain these points as a form of "currency" that they can then spend to grant their modern characters additional benefits as shown on the table below.

FLASHBACK XP CURRENCY COSTS

Benefit	Cost in Flashback XP
Extra action point[1]	ECL[2] ×250
Extra skill point[3]	ECL[2] ×250
Extra feat[4]	ECL[2] ×750
Item creation	You can create magic items using flashback XP at a 3:1 cost (that is, you must spend 3 points of flashback XP to replace a single point of "real" XP)
Spellcasting	You can use flashback XP to pay the XP cost of spells (or other powers), at a 3:1 cost

[1] As with all action points, these must be used before you gain a level or they are lost.

[2] This is the effective character level of the modern character.

[3] You are still limited to your normal maximum ranks, and you still must pay 2 skill points for each rank in a cross-class skill.

[4] You must meet all prerequisites for this feat, as normal.

CAMPAIGN ARC: DOOMSDAY'S CHILDREN

A flashback campaign works best when the PCs' success is determined by events in both time periods, or at least requires the players and characters to make use of knowledge gained in the flashbacks to succeed in the modern era. Doomsday's Children does not only this, but drives home the mental and emotional scars of the Last War that have not yet begun to heal. Both groups of PCs, flashback and modern, are soldiers (or at least citizens) of Thrane.

Doomsday's Children begins with a flashback to the mid-960s. Karrnath has lost many troops to Thrane's armies and is bogged down in the Thaliost region. Several Karrnathi warlords and generals are attempting to regroup using slightly unorthodox strategies. One of these is General Balthas Greist. A militant zealot and cleric of Vol, Greist has deliberately seeded several Thrane communities with plague, thus weakening the defenders before his undead legions attack. This disease is extremely virulent at the source—such as a contaminated well or a "patient zero"—but does not spread more than one or two iterations beyond, ensuring that it cannot rage out of control. The flashback PCs are among the defenders of one of these communities. They must find a way to ward off the advancing undead with shortages of personnel and allies dropping all around them, to say nothing of avoiding the illness themselves. Their best bet is to try to track down the source of the plague before the undead arrive, but the DM should consider any other reasonable plans they come up with.

The flashback ends with the modern PCs awakening. One of them has experienced the flashback as a dream. Its connection to ongoing events is not entirely clear, though there is obviously a thematic link. The city of Nathyrr (or some other Thrane city, if you prefer) is in the grip of a plague that resists clerical healing. The PCs are assisting in the evacuation or containment of the most heavily struck districts of the city, while trying to maintain order and cracking down on looting and criminals who would take advantage of the situation. In the confusion, General Eldrast, one of the church's political allies and advisors, disappears from his quarters within the city. The PCs are ordered to investigate.

Their investigation is interrupted by a sudden uprising among the region's warforged—and indeed, so they hear, among the warforged in other nations as well. Only a small percentage of the warforged are revolting, but the violence, particularly against those already weakened by the plague, ignites a substantial amount of social unrest. Attacks on warforged increase, as do protests and demands for the entire race to be scrapped. Only after substantial effort, and not a few fights, can the PCs and other officials restore peace to the city. The PCs now have a choice—they can continue to investigate the missing general, or they can attempt to learn what sparked the sudden uprising, which is far too well timed to be coincidence. (They likely wind up investigating both, in which case you can run stories based on all the following, in whichever order is appropriate.)

If the PCs can earn the trust of any in the warforged community, they learn that a few specific warforged were the ones agitating for the revolt, and that many others cooperated due to a string of recent crimes against warforged. They eventually learn that nobody has seen any of the agitators since the uprising, and that the crimes seem to have started at roughly the same time as the agitators first appeared—clearly a setup to stir racial tensions. If they research, however, they find that this same tactic has been used before, in the early days of warforged participation in the Last War.

The next, relatively brief, flashback takes place in the Cyran city of Kalazart. Cyre has just recently begun fielding large numbers of warforged, and the flashback PCs have been dispatched to gather information from within Cyre regarding the number and disposition of those forces. For the most part, this involves infiltrating Cyran military installations and making off with various plans and strategies. While they are present, however, the PCs do learn of dissension in the warforged ranks. Several warforged, led by one named Sever, are unhappy at their treatment by the humanoids they serve. Before the PCs leave the city, they are caught up in a small warforged uprising, inspired by Sever, who escapes before the Cyran forces can capture him.

Investigation into General Eldrast's disappearance reveals that he had recently taken on, as a paramour, a Cyran survivor by the name of Sorshe Lavond. Although the PCs cannot find her, they do learn that she is wanted in New Cyre for agitating against Breland and the other nations. If the PCs want any more information on her, they will have to travel there. (You could consider running some unrelated side trek adventures during the journey.)

Before they leave, however, the PCs learn that several of the rich and powerful of other nations disappeared at roughly the same time as General Eldrast. Any PC who has ranks in Knowledge (history) vaguely recalls a similar incident during the war, when a number of wealthy and noble children vanished. If the PCs investigate this, they can find historical records, leading to another flashback adventure.

In this flashback, Ilsendra Koll, a Karrnathi warlord, has sent operatives to kidnap many of the children of powerful families throughout the other nations. She intended to use these children as bargaining chips, to help obtain military victories by forcing other nations to capitulate. One of Koll's generals was Balthas Greist, who took the opportunity to infect the children with a modified version of his artificial plague. This one would remain dormant until the children were exposed to a special magical trigger. This way, when the children were either returned or rescued, he would have weapons hidden throughout the other nations.

The flashback PCs do not know any of this, but they are among those tasked with locating and retrieving the children—a rare joint effort by all the other four nations. This mission involves a lightning raid into Karrnathi territory, using a combination of stealth and violence to penetrate Koll's defenses and mount a rescue.

The information gleaned in their research (and the prior flashback) leads the modern PCs to a disturbing discovery: Everyone who has recently disappeared was one of the children kidnapped by Ilsendra Koll!

Pursuing their only remaining lead, the PCs eventually arrive in New Cyre, where they can attempt to track down Sorshe Lavond. In New Cyre, they are attacked not only by Lavond's companions, but by several Mournland monstrosities that they have smuggled out of the gray mists and kept caged. The PCs learn that Lavond is part of an organization of Cyran survivors that still burn with hatred about the war, and wish to see all the nations destroyed. Through intimidation, stealth, or magic, the PCs can locate the group's headquarters, hidden on the outskirts of New Cyre. There they find writings that detail General Greist's use of disease, and the fact that all the "rescued" children were infected. The material also indicates that the warforged Sever was able to trigger some of these plague-carriers against Greist's intentions.

Next, the flashback PCs find themselves dispatched to investigate why an entire town in Thrane has fallen silent. Their discovery is horrific: The townsfolk have been wiped out by a virulent plague, very much like the one they faced years ago. Some of the townsfolk have not remained dead, and the PCs must prevent the spread not of plague, but of plague-spawned undead!

Alas, they are never able to locate the source of the contagion, but an encounter with several hostile warforged certainly suggests Sever's involvement.

The modern PCs learn one other important piece of information: Sever's base of operations, as chronicled by the Cyran terrorists who are working with him, is in the Mournland. Sever serves no lesser being than the Lord of Blades!

Deep within the Mournland, the PCs have their final confrontation. (Whether Sever actually serves the Lord of Blades or is the Lord of Blades, using a prior identity, is entirely up to the needs of the campaign.) The militant warforged have managed to increase the virulence of the plague, so that it will spread infinitely rather than restricting itself to one or two iterations. Using the plague-bearers who have been lured or kidnapped here, and the Cyran terrorists who remain unaware of the plague's true potential, this scheme poses a sufficiently large threat to destroy Khorvairian society entirely. The PCs must either stop the threat here or, if some of the nobles have already begun to make their way back home, they must track down every one of them to prevent a deadly outbreak.

A mysterious artifact provides a gateway through time itself

TIME-TRAVEL CAMPAIGNS

Why choose between whether to set your campaign during the Last War or the modern era when you can do both? Why require the players to run two groups of PCs when they can experience both periods through the same eyes? Eberron is a world of magic, and that magic is not necessarily limited to the spells in the *Player's Handbook*, the items in the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*, or even the artifacts in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. With the right application of potent magic, characters in your campaign might be able to travel the currents of time itself, shifting back and forth from modern-day Eberron to the heights of the Last War (or indeed to any other epoch you choose to take them).

Of course, time travel comes with its own hazards—not just for the PCs, but for the DM, who can find the campaign stuck or spiraling out of control without careful advance planning.

This section, as written, assumes time travel between the modern era of Eberron and various periods of the Last War. You can, of course, extrapolate the material here to allow the PCs to visit other epochs, perhaps letting them experience the foundation of Galifar or even the empire of the giants on Xen'drik, but this goes well beyond the scope of this work. You could potentially allow them to visit the future, though this requires you develop a fairly solid notion of how your version of the EBERRON setting will develop. Alternatively, you can simply decide that travel to the future is impossible, simply because those events haven't yet been determined.

THE BASICS OF A TIME-TRAVEL CAMPAIGN

Before introducing something as potentially complex and game-shaking as time travel, think carefully about whether it's your best option. Do you have some really interesting adventures or stories that require the PCs to operate in multiple time periods, to correct potential paradoxes, or to creatively arrange prior events to ensure victory today? Or are you just looking for something new and exciting, a way of making the players go "Wow"? If the former, great—go for it. If the latter, though, we recommend you find some other technique. Time travel done right is a lot of work, and time travel done wrong is either a headache or a bore, the same old adventure with different trappings.

You should also have some idea if time travel is to be a focus of the campaign, with multiple adventures requiring passage through time, or if you'd just like to use the concept for a single plotline. Even in the latter case, you'll want to give some thoughts to the issue below—"How thoroughly can the PCs change history?" being perhaps the most vital—but you can afford to devote less attention to matters such as paradox or how to "fix" historical events that change beyond your expectations.

Methods of Time Travel

Despite the fact that none of the core rules cover it, magic can provide a variety of methods for characters to move back in time. It's worth considering such methods—for flavor purposes, even they're not likely to have a major impact on the adventure, and in some cases the exact device required can influence the plotline itself.

Powerful Spell: A largely unknown 9th-level spell (or even higher, if your campaign makes use of epic rules) allows travel between time periods. In order to make their journey, the PCs must locate someone capable of casting such a potent spell and convince that individual to do so.

AncientArtifact: The magic to sail the river of time comes not from an individual, but from an item. This might be something as tiny and innocuous as a scroll, or as imposing as a rune-inscribed gateway of black stone that towers over its surroundings. Though it might be easier to use such an artifact than to obtain the aid of a mighty spellcaster, the artifact has the disadvantage of functioning for anyone who knows how to use it—including the party's rivals.

Ambient Effects: The time-travel effect need not be attached to an obvious source, or even under anyone's conscious control. Perhaps all it takes is entry to a certain area or exposure to an abnormal aura. The PCs might enter the swirling mists in a truly warped region of the Mournland, or an uncharted cave in the Labyrinth of the Demon Wastes, and emerge not only in a different place but a different time. This sort of unpredictable and uncontrollable time travel has entirely different repercussions from those of the methods above, since neither the PCs nor the players can prepare for it, and they might not initially recognize what has occurred.

Motives for Time Travel

Although potential motives for traveling into the past are limitless, the majority fall into one of four general categories. Consider which of these are central to the adventure you've planned, since you might wish to base your other decisions (such as how much power the PCs have to actually change history) in part on their objectives.

Study and Observation: The most passive motive for time travel, this involves no change in history at all—or at least no intentional change. Characters travel through time purely to see an event or historical period firsthand. They might need information otherwise unavailable to obtain some goal in the present, they might wish to reclaim knowledge of a few spells lost during or after the war, or they might simply have an unusual means of exercising a strong sense of historical curiosity.

Interference and Alteration: The characters travel back to the past with the intent of changing history itself. Perhaps they wish to prevent the destruction of Cyre, or to ensure that a particular nation wins the Last War. Alternatively, their goals can be far smaller and more personal, such as saving the life of a loved one who was slain. Still, no matter their goal, this is essentially a selfish objective, because it risks changing or even destroying the lives of every living being in order to obtain an end that only a few characters might believe in. Though it's possible to run a time-travel adventure in which the PCs seek to change history, this is more often the goal of villains in such a plot.

Correct ion and Preservation: The opposite of the previous entry, this motive incorporates any circumstance in which some time traveler or other "historically inappropriate" force has changed the events of the past, and the characters must travel back in time to repair history itself.

Alternatively, the change in history might not yet have occurred, and the PCs are traveling in time to prevent it. For instance, they might know of a zealot who has traveled back in time to prevent the creation of the warforged, and the party seeks to stop him before he succeeds.

Participation, Assimilation, or Obsession: Perhaps the rarest and oddest of time-travel motives, this refers to a character who simply wishes to insert herself into life in a prior era. This desire might be rooted in a historical fascination that has developed into a full-blown desire to live in a prior world, an obsessive love (or supposed love) for a historical figure, or any other motive that might inspire someone to prefer an older time. This seems innocuous enough, but there's no telling what sort of damage an individual from the present could cause in the past, influencing history without even realizing it.

THE RIVER OF TIME

Although the PCs have the potential to change history as written in the *EBERRON Campaign Setting* in both the historical and flashback campaign models, the time-travel model has the added complication that not only the players, but the characters, know the way history is "supposed" to turn out. This knowledge enables them to avoid taking steps that might accidentally alter the events of history, but it also makes it far easier, and more likely, that they might attempt to deliberately do so. Perhaps the most important decision you must make when designing a

An Inexact Science

Time travel is among the most complex procedures imaginable—more so, certainly, than simple teleportation or even planar travel—and not even magic might be capable of total precision. Just as plane shift can only guarantee arrival within 500 miles of a specific target, so the various methods of time travel might not be able to ensure arrival at a specific moment. Characters could arrive days, weeks, months, or even years away from their intended destination. This allows you the opportunity to work in additional adventures outside the party's normal era, without necessarily tying them in to any overarching plot. You can even work in unrelated character complications. What happens if a character falls in love with someone from another time period? What if someone decides he or she prefers life in the past?

It probably goes without saying, but unless you deliberately want the PCs to miss their goal entirely, you'll want any inaccuracies in time travel to place them before the target date, rather than after.

time-travel adventure is this: To what extent can history be changed by time-travelers, and how do you intend to handle the repercussions?

Unbroken Flow

This is the simplest time-travel model, but the players could find it frustrating. Under this model, a time traveler cannot change history in any way, shape, or form. History has already been written, and not even the most zealous effort or potent magic can change it. Characters might travel to the past, and might interact with people and events, but nothing they do makes any difference.

As the DM, you have multiple ways of enforcing this fact. The most difficult method, but ultimately the most satisfying, is to have something occur in the course of play to prevent it. An accomplice of the assassin steps in to delay the PCs just long enough that they fail to stop the assassination of Queen Mishann. A storm blows in, perhaps summoned by an enemy spellcaster, to slow down the mercenary army the PCs have gathered, preventing them from changing the outcome of the Battle of Brey River.

You cannot, of course, account for everything. Sometimes, the PCs might win through your obstacles despite your best efforts. Under these circumstances, the PCs might be stopped by an unseen force, or they might even appear to succeed in their goals, only to discover that history has repaired itself and "written out" their involvement once they return to their own time. These options are far less satisfying to the players, and can make them feel frustrated or railroaded, but if you've made it clear that time cannot be changed in your campaign—and if you don't use these methods unless absolutely necessary—you can probably get away with it.

Ripples in the Stream

A compromise between two extremes, this model of time travel allows travelers and PCs to alter specific events, perhaps changing the fates of individuals, but not to change the course of history as a whole. For instance, the characters might succeed in saving a loved one from dying in a plague, but they could not stop the plague itself—or, if they do, a second natural disaster occurs with largely the same effect. Should a traveler somehow slay Kaius before the Battle of the Galifar Heirs, his successor performs roughly the same actions, leading to the same general course of the Last War. If the PCs turn the tide of a great battle during the war, another clash turns against the winners, leading to the same eventual result. If they stop Aaren d'Cannith from discovering the means of creating sentient warforged, someone else makes the same discovery. Ultimately, they might change the way major events occur, perhaps even postpone them slightly, but they cannot change the final outcome.

Although this could seem frustrating for players, it still allows them to achieve personal victories, some of which might be far more important, at least in the eyes of particular PCs.

Changing the Course of Rivers

The most difficult to handle of all time-travel adventures, but also the one that grants the PCs and players the greatest amount of influence, this model assumes that the PCs can change history just as easily as they can alter events in their own time. If the PCs turn the tide of a major battle, they might truly change the course of the Last War, granting a true and overwhelming victory to a single nation. Assassinating or rescuing a major historical figure might also alter the course of history.

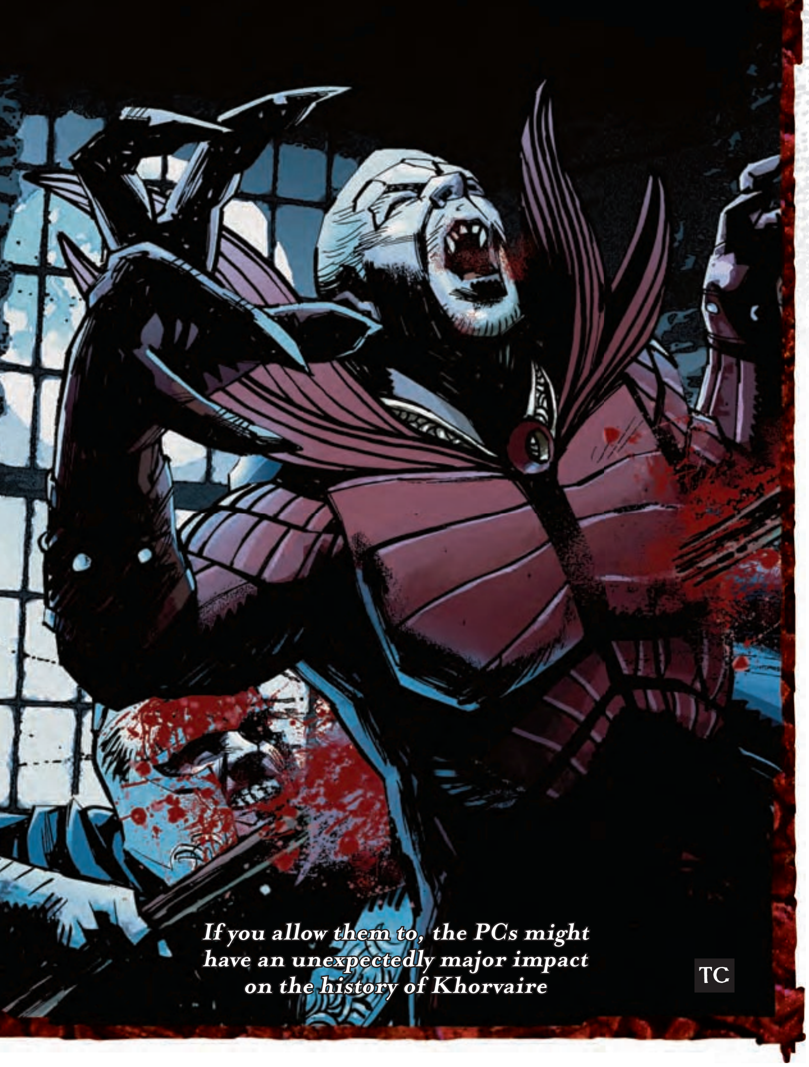
THAT GUY LOOKS FAMILIAR . . .

Some of the strangest elements of time travel include oddities such as characters meeting themselves, or creating paradoxes in which characters take actions that would make prior acts impossible. As the Dungeon Master, you need to decide how much to worry about these, and to what extent.

The easiest method is, of course, simply to disallow it. The PCs cannot travel to a time in which they are already alive; the magic simply doesn't work if they don't go back far enough. Similarly, no matter how much they might be able to alter history in other ways, they are incapable of creating any blatant paradoxes. For instance, they would be prevented from killing their own grandfathers and thus preventing their births, or from preventing the creation of the artifact that sent them back in time in the first place.

It is, however, impossible to avoid paradoxes in time travel. By definition, if the PCs go back in time to fix a problem, and succeed in doing so, the problem would then never have occurred in their time, giving them no reason to go back in time in the first place. (Dizzy yet?) In most cases, you can simply assume that those who travel time are not themselves affected by changes in history; the very fact that they're already outside their own "proper" place in time prevents time from changing them as thoroughly as it does others. In fact, you can take advantage of this. Allow the PCs to come back from one trip through time, only to discover that the world has changed—perhaps slightly, perhaps drastically—and that nobody else seems to notice. Because they were safely out of the way of history when some great change occurred, they remain aware of that change and can take steps to repair it. This sort of storyline gives you free rein to make all sorts of changes to Eberron, shifting political borders, killing off major NPCs, or anything else you'd like. After all, assuming the PCs succeed in their next adventure, it'll all be put right soon enough.

If you do choose to allow PCs to interact with their own "past selves," you'll also need to essentially ignore such questions as "Wait, if I met myself in the past, why didn't I remember the meeting?" In books, TV, or movies, it's possible to write a story that takes such events into account. Not even the best DM can always count on keeping such events straight, or planning them in advance, and you certainly cannot count on the events going entirely as planned. Better to assume that the PCs' failure to remember meeting themselves is just another side-effect of their being outside time's true path.



If you allow them to, the PCs might have an unexpectedly major impact on the history of Khorvaire

Even minor actions by the PCs in the past can change the entire shape of Eberron in the present.

Although this can be a great deal of fun, it's a lot of work. You could, essentially, be redesigning the setting wholesale each time the PCs travel in time, and you need to determine how far-reaching the repercussions of a given change might be. Does altering the outcome of a given battle allow Thrane to win the Last War? What does that do to the political map? How does modern Khorvaire differ, once the Silver Flame is the dominant faith continentwide? What does Thrane-occupied Karrnath look like? Who's still alive? Who's dead? What's happened to the dragonmarked houses?

If your campaign model allows for unchecked alterations of history, you'll want to plan well in advance. Limit the number of adventures that involve time travel, and think through the ramifications of every major event in which you plan to involve the PCs. Obviously you cannot anticipate every possible outcome, but a little planning should at least give you an idea of how to reorder the setting based on the PCs' actions.

CAMPAIGN ARC: FUGITIVES IN TIME

A time-travel campaign need not involve actual time travel in every single adventure; in fact, it might involve only a few such events throughout its length. It should, however, incorporate the notion of time travel far more frequently, perhaps requiring the PCs to deal with its repercussions even when they are not embarking on such journeys themselves.

The campaign begins when a handful of prisoners performs the impossible—an escape from Dreadhold Prison. The dwarf wardens certainly don't want word of the jailbreak to leak, so they cannot simply announce it to their connections in the various governments. Instead, they hire a group of professionals—the PCs—to track down and retrieve or slay the fugitives. The escapees include Pardor Fahn, a crazed worshiper of the Lords of Dust; Shiar the changeling, a member of the Scions Liberation Front (page 94); the warforged Sever, a disciple of the Lord of Blades (or another warforged, if you've already played through the Doomsday's Children arc in a previous campaign); and the one who orchestrated the escape, Colonel Qoppa, a zealot of the Emerald Claw.

The PCs' investigation reveals that the husband of one of Dreadholds guards was taken by a Khyber cult, which used him as leverage to force her to aid in the fugitives' escape. Fighting their way through agents of the Lords of Dust, the PCs track Fahn to the Blackcaps, near Black Pit in Breland. There, deep in a cave that seems to go on forever, the party pursues Fahn through a chamber of shifting auras, not unlike the northern lights. Although the lights are nearly blinding, they seem to have no overt effect. The PCs emerged, unscathed, from the other side, and confront the first fugitive.

Only as they continue their investigations, or perhaps return home to rest before going on, do they begin to realize something is wrong. You should seed small hints into your descriptions, such as NPCs failing to remember events the PCs remember clearly. Eventually, the characters discover that in passing through the glowing cavern, they actually traveled several weeks back in time.

This is not the only thing that seems to have changed. Other subtle shifts have occurred. Breland is clearly on a wartime footing, and it swiftly becomes apparent that the other nations are, too. The Last War, which was supposed to have ended two years ago, still rages unabated. The party might choose to research past events, or simply attempt to Gather Information. Either reveals that the Treaty of Thronehold was sabotaged, as an assassin somehow got into the assembly and slew members of the Aundairan and Thrane contingent. Recriminations and accusations flew, and negotiations fell apart before a wave of renewed hostilities. Clearly, something has happened to alter history.

Perhaps through research, perhaps through trial-and-error, the PCs learn that they can use the cavern to travel farther back into the past than a mere few weeks, and indeed that the three remaining fugitives have all done so. Obviously, the PCs must travel to the signing of Thronehold, where they have to prevent Shiar from sabotaging the talks that resulted in Thaliost being ceded to Thrane. Shiar makes full use of her abilities to disguise herself, attempting to lead the PCs to blame the wrong individuals for her actions.

When the PCs return home, they discover that although things have changed, the world has not returned to the way it should be. No warforged walk the streets (and any warforged PCs are greeted with hostility and suspicious looks, and might be attacked). Karrnath occupies much of what should be Aundair, and an entire warforged nation exists within the boundaries of the Mournland. Further research into history reveals that House Cannith created sentient warforged far earlier than the PCs remember from their own knowledge of the past, and that the warforged rebelled against the Five Nations late in the war, led by Sever and the Lord of Blades.

They must hunt down Sever in the middle years of the Last War, for it was he who aided House Cannith in developing the warforged early—precisely so he could then slowly work at orchestrating a warforged revolution.

Knowing that there is a third fugitive loose, the characters might expect to discover a third set of changes when they return home, but they are likely unprepared for the extent. Karrnath rules the entirety of the Five Nations with a militant iron fist. (And indeed, there are a full Five Nations; the Day of Mourning seems never to have occurred.) Emerald Claw enforcers and undead patrols crack down on even the most minor violations of law with ruthless efficiency. Even worse, Colonel Qoppa clearly foresaw the possibility of interference in his plans. Before the PCs can find their way back through time again, the cavern in the Blackcaps is obliterated by Karrnathi warmages.

The PCs must quest for some other method of returning to the past and restoring history. In the process, they have to learn to survive in this new, despotic regime, and to unearth the exact point in history where Qoppa interfered with events. This might take only a few adventures, or it can stretch for many sessions of game play, depending on how thoroughly you wish to explore this "alternate Eberron." Eventually, however, the PCs uncover some other means of time travel—perhaps aided by a resistance made up of Silver Flame loyalists and Cyran separatists, including NPCs whom the PCs have met before, but are now dramatically altered. The PCs learn that Colonel Qoppa assembled an additional army of mercenaries and Karrnathi loyalists to strike from the flank during the Battle of the Galifar Heirs, preventing Mishann from escaping and ending the war almost before it began. Only by stopping the introduction of these additional forces can the PCs finally restore their world to its "true" nature and history.

NEW MONSTERS

Of the five monsters described in this section, two—the arcane ballista and the Karrnathi dread marshal—are mentioned in the events of the Last War as outlined in Chapter One of this book. The other three are provided for use as the DM sees fit, either in a Last War campaign or a standard campaign, to provide an element of surprise for the player characters.

ARCANE BALLISTA

This elaborate, well-decorated weapon of war appears harmless without a crew . . . until it shifts to aim in your direction and begins loading itself.

Arcane ballistas are animated siege engines, capable of loading their own ammunition and magically enhancing it to terrible effect. An arcane ballista is controlled by a command amulet; any arcane spellcaster wearing the amulet can give it simple instructions.

An arcane ballista normally attacks by firing bolts at targets from a distance. If threatened in melee, it swings its loading arm like a club against adjacent foes.

ARCANE BALLISTA **CR 5**

Always N Large construct
Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen —, Spot —
Languages —

AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18
(–1 size, –1 Dex, +5 armor, +5 natural)
hp 63 (6 HD)
Immune construct immunities (*MM* 307)
Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** –3

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee slam +8 (1d8+7)
Ranged bolt +5 (3d8+3 plus 1d6 fire/×2 plus 1d10 fire)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +13

Abilities Str 20, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1
SQ construct traits, flaming burst bolts, self-loading
Feats —
Skills —
Advancement 7–9 HD (Large); 10–18 HD (Huge)

Flaming Burst Bolts Bolts fired by this magical ballista are treated as *+3 flaming burst bolts*.

Self-Loading An arcane ballista can load itself as a move action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

An arcane ballista is a mindless construct, and generally obeys its commander without a dash of ingenuity or resourcefulness. Left to its own devices, it attacks to defend itself, using its slam attack against adjacent foes.

SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

See the Armies of Aundair entry on page 47 for a sample squad that includes an arcane ballista.

ECOLOGY

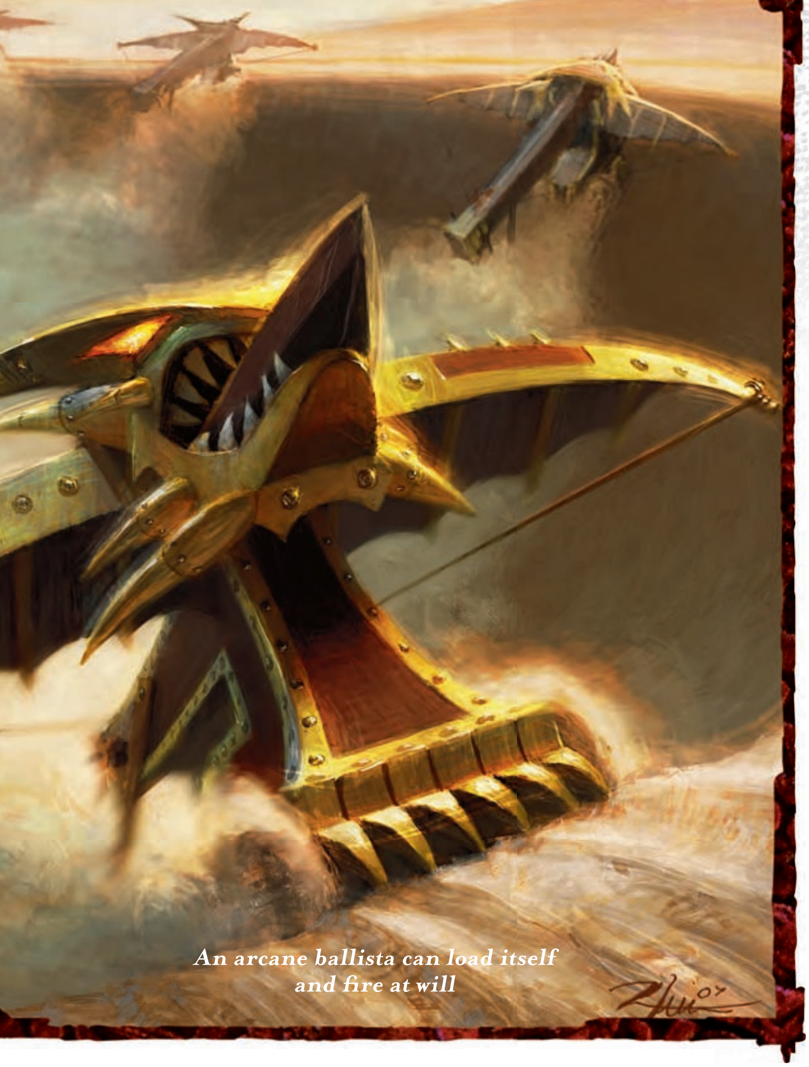
Arcane ballistas are mindless constructs that do not eat, sleep, or breathe. They rely on a supply of spearlike bolts as ammunition, but they imbue ordinary bolts with magic as part of the magic of their construction. They are weapons of war, lacking even the rudimentary sentience of a warforged titan, obeying the orders of their commanders to the letter.

ARCANE BALLISTA LORE

Characters who have ranks in Knowledge (arcana) can research arcane ballistas to learn more about them. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

Knowledge (arcana)

DC	Result
15	This is clearly a ballista animated as a construct. It is probably mindless, lacking even a trace of sentience. This result reveals all construct traits.
20	An arcane ballista fires huge crossbow bolts tipped with magical fire. If cornered, it can attack adjacent foes with its loading arm.



An arcane ballista can load itself and fire at will

The amulet that controls an arcane ballista is forged as part of the ballista's creation, and it functions only when worn by a character who is capable of casting arcane spells.

Environment: As a weapon of war, an arcane ballista is most commonly found on the battlefield. A few arcane ballistas can be found guarding House Cannith enclaves, noble estates, or military arsenals.

Typical Physical Characteristics: An arcane ballista is a Huge heavy crossbow covered in armored plating and mounted on a metal stand about 12 feet high. It weighs about 100 pounds. Despite its lack of any facial features, including eyes, it can perceive the world around it with darkvision and low-light vision.

Alignment: As mindless automatons, arcane ballistas are always neutral.

TYPICAL TREASURE

Arcane ballistas do not carry or hoard treasure. However, if its command amulet is captured, an arcane ballista is itself exceedingly valuable.

FOR PLAYER CHARACTERS

An arcane ballista is a masterwork ballista (cost 800 gp) plated with armor and mounted on a stand (an additional 200 gp).

Assembling a ballista requires a DC 18 Craft (weaponsmithing) check. It must then be transformed into a *+3 flaming burst ballista,* and finally animated and keyed to the command amulet. The creation cost includes materials for the amulet as well as the ballista.

CL 12th; Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, and *flame blade, flame strike,* or *fireball;* Price 75,000 gp; Cost 37,000 gp (including 1,000 gp for the ballista and stand) + 2,960 XP.

KARRNATHI DREAD MARSHAL

Among the shambling undead soldiers, one clearly stands out from the others. Its breastplate bears insignia of rank, and a sinister intelligence twists the expression of its desiccated, sunken face.

Toward the latter half of the war, Karrnath's generals acknowledged that they lacked sufficient field-capable officers to command their legions. Their undead soldiers, though superior to standard skeletons and zombies, required supervision by more intelligent and more creative individuals. The result of substantial necromantic experimentation was the dread marshal, an undead officer of greater skill, higher Intelligence, and a substantially stronger sense of personality, than any Karrnathi undead before. Not only capable of leading, the dread marshals possessed abilities that allowed them to augment the powers of the undead who fought under their command, greatly enhancing the potency of the unit.

KARRNATHI DREAD MARSHAL CR 5

Always LE Medium undead
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +6
Aura see text
Languages Common

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20
(+5 armor, +5 natural)
hp 42 (5 HD); **DR** 5/bludgeoning or 5/slashing; see text
Immune undead immunities (*MM* 317)
Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Speed 20 ft. in breastplate (4 squares), base speed 30 ft.
Melee mwk greatsword +7 (2d6+4/19–20)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5
Atk Options vampiric touch
Special Actions auras, rebuke undead 5/day (+2, 2d6+7, 5th)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 11, Con —, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14
SQ undead traits, unholy toughness
Feats Great Fortitude^{B}, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes^{B}, Weapon Focus (greatsword)
Skills Climb +5, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +7, Jump –1, Listen +6, Ride +5, Search +6, Spot +6, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks)
Advancement 6–20 HD (Medium)
Possessions masterwork breastplate, masterwork greatsword

Auras (Su) A dread marshal constantly projects one of the auras described below. That aura affects all allied undead (including the dread marshal itself) within 30 feet. If the undead are currently controlled by the marshal's rebuke undead ability, they are affected so long as they are within 60 feet. A dread marshal can project only one such aura at a time, but can shift to a new aura as a swift action.

Harden Flesh The natural armor bonus of all allied undead within range increases by +2.

Negative Energy Emanation Any living being that strikes an allied undead with a melee attack (excluding weapons with exceptional reach) suffers 2 points of negative energy damage.

Negative Energy Infusion All allied undead within range do an extra 2 points of damage on melee attacks. This is negative energy damage. Each time an allied undead deals this negative energy damage, it heals 1 hit point of damage, up to its normal maximum.

Rush All allied undead increase their base land speed by an amount equal to the aura bonus × 5 feet. (Thus, a standard Karrnathi dread marshal adds 10 feet to base movement.) Zombies or other undead that normally cannot run or take full-round actions gain the ability to do so.

Turn Resistance All allied undead within range gain turn resistance +2. This stacks with any turn resistance they might already possess.

Damage Reduction (Ex) Karrnathi dread marshals that resemble skeletons have damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, and those that resemble zombies have damage reduction 5/slashing.

Rebuke Undead (Su) A Karrnathi dread marshal can rebuke undead as an evil cleric. Its effective rebuking level is equal to its Hit Dice.

Unholy Toughness (Ex) A Karrathi dread marshal gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Cha modifier × its Hit Dice.

Vampiric Touch (Su) As the spell; 3/day; +5 touch; caster level 5th.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Dread marshals do not exist in sufficient quantities to make up units of their own. Instead, the Karrnathi military assigns them as leaders of heavy undead squadrons, or occasionally as lead bodyguards for powerful officers and priests.

Despite their intelligence and sentience, dread marshals are supernaturally loyal to the Karrnathi chain of command. They follow orders to the best of their ability and, unlike many other undead, are capable of a reasonable degree of creative thinking and problem solving in doing so. In most combat situations, dread marshals prefer to command their undead soldiers from behind the front ranks, making use of their auras and rebuke abilities to bolster their effectiveness. This is not cowardice—dread marshals are more than willing to engage in melee when the situation warrants—but simply a recognition that they are more useful leading and strengthening their undead soldiers, and that they are less expendable than their minions.

Assuming a particular battle doesn't require alternative methods, dread marshals have a very specific order of priority when it comes to eliminating foes. Their first targets are clerics, followed by spellcasters with obvious area effects, and finally potent melee fighters. Though they recognize the benefits provided by bards, marshals, and other individuals who enhance their companions—that is, after all, what the dread marshal itself does—they rarely make such enemies primary targets.

SAMPLE ENCOUNTERS

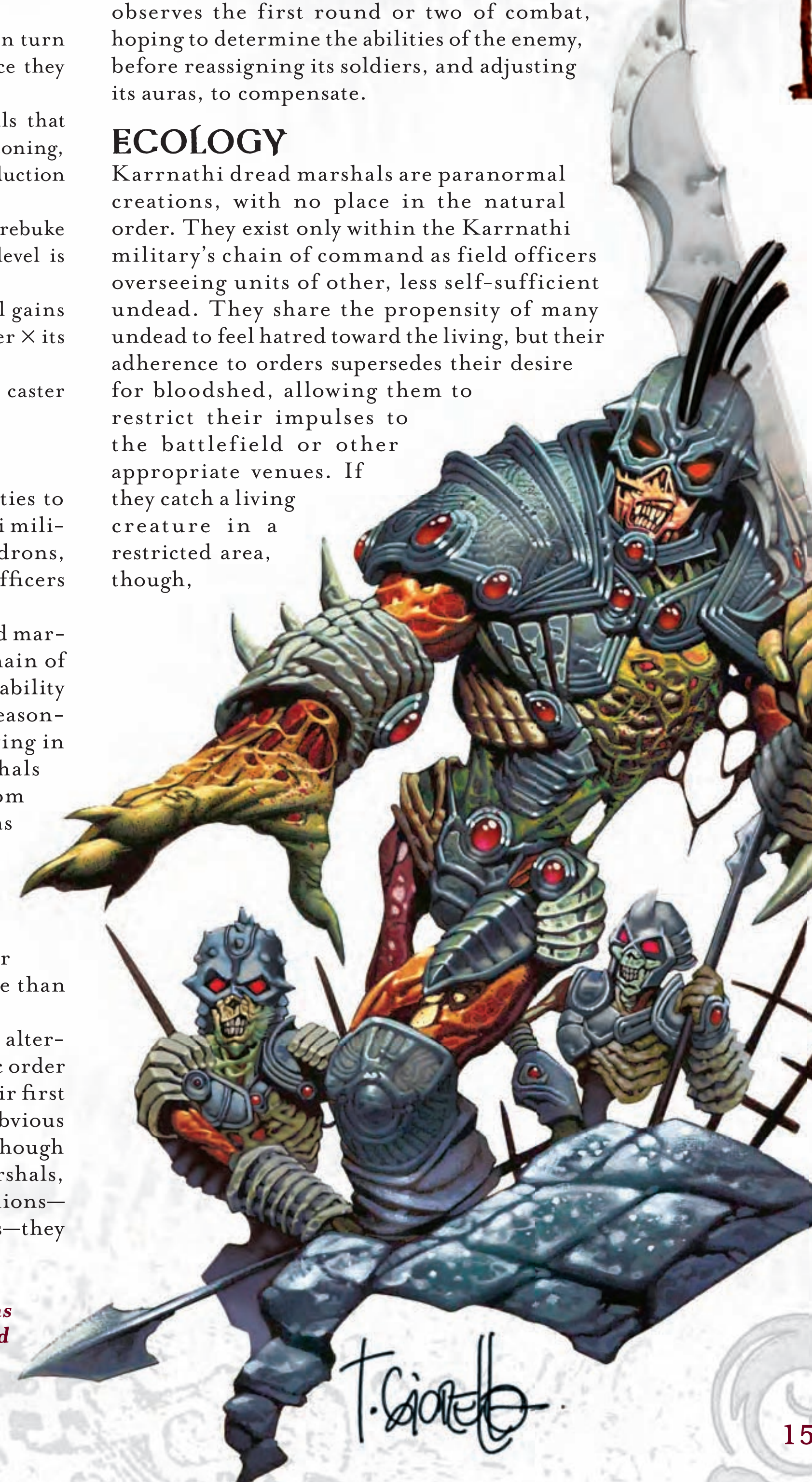
Unless caught by surprise, Karrnathi dread marshals never fight alone. Their abilities are simply too heavily focused on augmenting other undead to waste on lone endeavors. Thus, they are almost always found in the company of other undead, either on the field of battle or as guardians of military or religious institutions.

Guard Unit (EL 7): A dread marshal, along with three Karrnathi skeletons or zombies, stand as sentinels at the entryway of a Karrnathi temple known for training war-clerics.

Heavy Squad (EL 10): Dread marshals often lead units of ten Karrnathi undead into battle against enemy forces (see page 54). The dread marshal observes the first round or two of combat, hoping to determine the abilities of the enemy, before reassigning its soldiers, and adjusting its auras, to compensate.

ECOLOGY

Karrnathi dread marshals are paranormal creations, with no place in the natural order. They exist only within the Karrnathi military's chain of command as field officers overseeing units of other, less self-sufficient undead. They share the propensity of many undead to feel hatred toward the living, but their adherence to orders supersedes their desire for bloodshed, allowing them to restrict their impulses to the battlefield or other appropriate venues. If they catch a living creature in a restricted area, though,



Karrnathi dread marshals serve as hideous generals for other undead

or are taken by surprise, they resort instantly to violence unless strictly ordered otherwise.

Environment: Dread marshals are found wherever the Karrnathi military orders them to go. This most frequently means battlefields or military installations, but can be almost anywhere. They have no native environment.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Karrnathi dread marshals resemble other Karrnathi undead (*ECS* 292). Some are almost skeletal, with little if any mummified flesh or muscle tissue, while others are shambling corpses that appear to be Karrnathi zombies. For the most part, these differences are entirely cosmetic, with little effect on the dread marshal's abilities.

Alignment: All dread marshals are lawful evil, conditioned both to obey orders without question, and to take whatever actions are required to accomplish their goals.

SOCIETY

Karrnathi dread marshals have no true society of their own. They interact with others, be they undead or living, only as their positions in the military require. They fanatically obey the chain of command, but otherwise have no interest in society's castes or positions.

TYPICAL TREASURE

Unless they are granted an item by their superiors to accomplish a specific task, Karrnathi dread marshals carry nothing but their weapons and armor, as noted above.

ADVANCEMENT

When a dread marshal gains Hit Dice, the power of its auras might increase as well. A standard dread marshal grants a bonus of 2 (be it to turn resistance, damage, or the like) with its auras. For every 5 additional Hit Dice, this bonus increases by 1 (+3 at 10 HD, +4 at 15 HD, and +5 at 20 HD).

Karrnathi Dread Marshal Lore

Characters who have ranks in Knowledge (religion) can research Karrnathi dread marshals to learn more about them. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

Knowledge (religion)

DC	Result
15	Although it looks very much like a standard Karrnathi undead, you believe this to be a dread marshal, an undead officer of greater intelligence, martial skill, and force of personality than its lesser comrades. This result reveals all undead traits.
20	A dread marshal can command undead like an evil cleric, drain life with a touch several times a day in order to replenish its own vitality, and generate auras that bolster other undead.
25	This level of success reveals the precise nature of the auras available to dread marshals.

MISTLING

Mistlings are fey that once dwelt in the wilds of Cyre. They now haunt the blasted Mournland, particularly the borders within the gray mists, maddened creatures as twisted and malevolent as the natural environs they once inhabited.

MISTLING DRYAD

This creature resembles a humanoid woman carved of burnished wood—or at least, it might once have done so. Cracks and spots of black blight mar the perfection of her skin. Her leaflike hair is cracked and brittle, her limbs uneven and twisted, and her eyes shine with madness. Wisps of foul gray smoke drift from her mouth, her eyes, her nose, and the cracks in her skin.

Mistling dryads were once normal dryads whose trees grew on the borders of Cyre. Most such trees were obliterated by the Mourning, or else twisted so hideously that they cannot support life, but a rare few were corrupted without being totally stripped of their inherent connection to nature. The dryads who dwelt in those trees were warped into mistlings.

Mistling Dryad CR 5

Always CE Medium fey
Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15
(+4 Dex, +5 natural)
Miss Chance 20% misty aura
hp 22 (4 HD); **DR** 5/cold iron and magic
Immune disease, poison, polymorph
Resist acid 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 14
Fort +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee dagger +6 (1d4+1/19–20) or
Melee claw +6 (1d4+1 plus poison)
Ranged mwk longbow +7 (1d8/×3)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2
Atk Options aligned strike, magic strike, poison (DC 14, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex)
Special Actions *conjure living spell*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th):
At will—*entangle* (DC 11), *speak with plants, tree shape*
3/day—*charm person* (DC 11), *deep slumber* (DC 13), *obscuring mist* (CL 4th), *tree stride*
1/day—*suggestion* (DC 13), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 16, CL 4th)

Abilities Str 12, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 18
SA poison
SQ madness, misty aura, tree dependent, wild empathy +16 (+12 magical beasts)
Feats Great Fortitude, Weapon Finesse
Skills Escape Artist +11, Handle Animal +11, Hide +11*, Knowledge (nature) +11, Listen +7, Move Silently +11, Ride +6, Spot +7, Survival +7, Use Rope +4 (+6 with bindings)
Advancement by character class; **Favored Class** druid
Possessions dagger, masterwork longbow

Aligned Strike (Su) A mistling's natural weapons are treated as chaotic-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Magic Strike (Su) A mistling's natural weapons are treated as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Conjure Living Spell (Sp) Once per day, a mistling can transform any spell or spell-like ability it can cast into a living spell (*ECS* 293). This requires a full-round action, and it counts as one daily use or casting of the spell or spell-like ability. The resultant living spell lasts for a number of hours equal to the mistling's Hit Dice or until destroyed, and follows the mental orders of its creator.

Madness (Ex) Anyone targeting a mistling with a thought detection, mind control, or telepathic ability makes direct contact with its tortured mind and takes 1d4 points of Wisdom damage.

Misty Aura (Su) A mistling constantly emits wisps of gray mist. This grants the mistling concealment and a +8 circumstance bonus to Hide checks in areas of fog, mist, smoke, or other vaporous conditions.

Tree Dependent (Su) A mistling dryad is mystically bound to a single, enormous oak tree and must never stray more than 300 yards from it. Any who do become ill and die within 4d6 hours. A dryad's oak does not radiate magic.

Wild Empathy (Ex) This power works like the druid's wild empathy class feature, except that the dryad has a +6 racial bonus on the check.

Skills *A mistling dryad gains a +8 circumstance bonus on Hide checks in areas of fog, mist, smoke, or other vaporous conditions.

Strategies and Tactics

Mistling dryads are insane. They torment living beings for the sheer joy of causing pain and often use their *entangle, charm,* and *suggestion* spell-like abilities to make potential victims more pliable. A mistling dryad whose tree is threatened enters a homicidal rage, fighting to the death.

Creating a Mistling

"Mistling" is an acquired template that can be added to any fey (referred to hereafter as the base creature.)

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +1 if HD 4 or less; as base creature +2 if HD 5 to 10; and as base creature +4 if HD 11 or more.

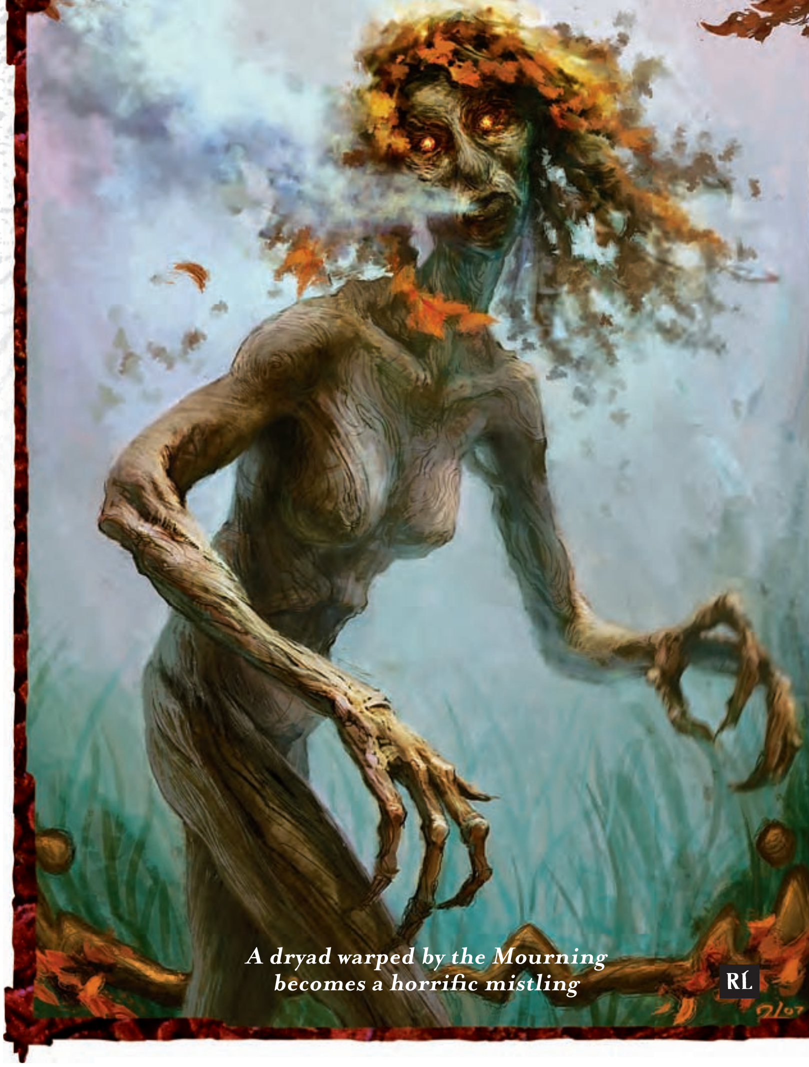
Alignment: The creature's alignment changes to chaotic evil.

Armor Class: The base creature's natural armor bonus increases by +2.

Attack: A mistling retains all the attacks of the base creature and also gains a claw attack if it didn't already have one. If the base creature can use weapons, the mistling retains this ability. A mistling with natural weapons retains those natural weapons. A mistling fighting without weapons uses either its claw attack or its primary natural weapon (if it has any). A mistling armed with a weapon uses its claw or the weapon, as it desires.

Damage: A mistling has a claw attack. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the appropriate damage value from the table below according to the creature's size. In addition, all of a mistling's natural attacks deal poison damage as well.

Size	Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1
Tiny	1d2
Small	1d3
Medium	1d4
Large	1d6
Huge	1d8
Gargantuan	2d6
Colossal	2d8



A dryad warped by the Mourning becomes a horrific mistling

Attack Options: A mistling retains all the attack options of the base creature. In addition, it gains the attack options described below.

Aligned Strike (Su): A mistling's natural weapons are treated as chaotic-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Magic Strike (Su): A mistling's natural weapons are treated as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Poison (Ex): A mistling's natural attacks deal poison damage. The save DC is Constitution-based. Poison damage is dependent on the base creature's Hit Dice, as shown below.

HD	Damage
1–3	1 Dex
4–6	1d2 Dex
7–9	1d3 Dex
10–12	1d4 Dex
13–15	1d6 Dex
16–18	1d8 Dex
19–20	2d6 Dex

Special Actions: A mistling retains all the special actions of the base creature. In addition, it gains the special action described below.

Conjure Living Spell (Sp): Once per day, a mistling can transform any spell or spell-like ability it can cast into a living spell (*ECS* 293). This requires a full-round action, and it counts as one daily casting or use of the spell or spell-like ability. The resultant living spell lasts for a number of hours equal to the mistling's Hit Dice or until destroyed, and it follows the mental orders of its creator.

Spell-Like Abilities: A mistling retains all the spell-like abilities of the base creature. In addition, a mistling with an Intelligence or Wisdom score of 8 or higher has additional spell-like abilities, depending on its Hit Dice, as indicated on the table below. The abilities are cumulative (except when the mistling simply gains additional daily uses of an existing ability). Unless otherwise noted, an ability is usable once per day. Caster level equals the creature's HD, and the save DCs are Charisma-based.

HD	Abilities
1–2	*Obscuring mist* 3/day
3–4	*Tasha's hideous laughter*
5–6	*Confusion*
7–8	*Baleful polymorph*
9–10	*Phantasmal killer*
11–12	*True seeing* 3/day
13–14	*Baleful polymorph* 3/day, *polymorph any object*
15–16	*Insanity*
17–18	*Antipathy*
19–20	*Polymorph any object* 3/day

Abilities: Change from the base creature as follows: Str +2, Con +4, Wis –4.

Special Qualities: A mistling retains all the special qualities of the base creature. In addition, it gains the special qualities described below.

Damage Reduction (Ex): A mistling's body is twisted and toughened, granting it damage reduction 5/cold iron and magic (if HD 11 or less) or 10/cold iron and magic (if HD 12 or more).

Immune: Disease, poison, and polymorph.

Resistances: Acid 10, electricity 10, fire 10.

Spell Resistance: A mistling gains spell resistance equal to its HD + 10 (maximum 35), unless it already has better spell resistance.

Madness (Ex): Anyone targeting a mistling with a thought detection, mind control, or telepathic ability makes direct contact with its tortured mind and takes 1d4 points of Wisdom damage.

Misty Aura (Su): A mistling constantly emits wisps of gray mist, very much like the haze that forms the borders of the Mournland. This effect grants a mistling concealment (20% miss chance) and a +8 circumstance bonus on Hide checks in areas of fog, mist, smoke, or other vaporous conditions.

Level Adjustment: +6.

Sample Encounter

Mistlings most frequently roam alone, lurking within the gray mist in search of prey. A significant minority, however, seem instinctively to form packs, the better to bring down larger quarry.

Rotten Orchard (EL 9): A quartet of oaks growing together were all corrupted by the Mourning, their root systems joining beneath the earth. The four dryads inhabiting those trees were great friends before the Mourning, and they travel as a predatory pack today. They prefer to focus their mind-affecting abilities on fighter-types, hoping to turn them against their allies. They always attack from different directions when circumstances and terrain allow.

Ecology

Mistlings are known to dwell only in the Mournland, though it's possible they, or creatures much like them, might also exist in other areas of great mystical corruption. Regardless of their initial dietary needs, they all become at least partly carnivorous. Because they enjoy causing pain to other creatures, they prefer eating their prey live, and they favor sentient beings over nonsentient. Few individuals other than perhaps adventurers hunt mistlings, due to their corrupt and poisonous nature.

Environment: Any plains, forests, hills, or underground, though to date mistlings have been limited to the Mournland. They favor areas that are obviously tainted in some fashion or another, preferring blasted wastes and twisted trees to forests that appear healthy and green, even if both have suffered equal exposure to deadly magic.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Mistlings resemble whatever type of fey they were before their transformations, but are clearly warped. Their limbs twist and deform, often causing limps or other impediments to movement that appear painful but have no mechanical impact. Their flesh seems injured or diseased, their teeth jagged and yellowed, and their eyes mad. They shrivel and wrinkle as they grow older, even if they suffer no actual penalties for aging. All mistlings give off wisps of gray mist.

Alignment: The corruption of the Mourning makes all mistlings chaotic evil.

MISTLING LORE

Characters who have ranks in Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (nature) can research mistlings to learn more about them. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

The base creature and its characteristics must be identified using the appropriate skill according to the base creature's type.

Knowledge (arcana or nature)

DC	Result
10 + CR	This creature is a mistling, a Cyre-dwelling fey horribly warped by the Mourning. Whatever its original nature, it has become a being of pure madness and cruelty.
15 + CR	Any fey can become a mistling, and it retains all of its original abilities. In addition, mistlings gain many powers of their own. This result reveals all the attack options, special actions, and special qualities of a mistling, but does not reveal specifically which HD-based abilities—such as spell-like abilities, or amount of damage reduction—the creature possesses.
20 + CR	This check result reveals the full extent of the creature's powers, including its HD-based spell-like abilities.

Typical Treasure

If the base creature normally possesses specific treasure, the mistling does too, as appropriate for its Challenge Rating. Otherwise, the mistling has half the appropriate treasure for its Challenge Rating, made up of the assembled leftovers and detritus of the various explorers and adventurers it has slain. Mistlings with Intelligence scores of 4 or higher are, though mad, sufficiently smart to use any magic items they might possess.

Advancement

Mistlings advance as the base creature.

Umbral Spy

Before your startled eyes, a diminutive humanoid figure detaches itself from your companion's shadow and flits away.

Umbral spies are shadowy, incorporeal constructs easily mistaken for undead. Their primary use is as tools of espionage, fielded by most of the factions of the Last War, but some few of them have wound up in the private sector, where guilds or criminal organizations use them to spy on competitors, clients, or law enforcement.

Umbral Spy CR 3

Always N Small construct (incorporeal)
Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages telepathy 100 ft.

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 12
(+1 size, +6 Dex, +1 deflection)
hp 26 (3 HD); **DR** 5/adamantine and magic
Immune construct immunities (*MM* 307)
Fort +1, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2

Speed fly 50 ft. (perfect) (10 squares)
Melee incorporeal touch +9 (1d3 plus 1d4 Wis)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +2; **Grp** –2
Special Actions shadow bond

Abilities Str 10, Dex 22, Con —, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 13
SQ hide in plain sight, thought link
Feats Ability Focus (shadow bond), Improved Initiative
Skills Hide +12*, Listen +3, Spot +3
Advancement 4–9 HD (Small)

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex) In any area darker than bright illumination, an umbral spy can use the Hide skill even when being observed.

Shadow Bond (Su) As a standard action, an umbral spy can attempt to bond with the shadow of any giant, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid of Small to Huge size. This requires a touch attack, and the subject can attempt a DC 13 Will save to resist. If the save fails, the umbral spy disappears into the subject's shadow. From that point on, it accompanies the subject everywhere, seeing what he sees, hearing what hears. At this time, the umbral spy is undetectable by any magic other than *true seeing*. An umbral spy can detach itself at will, and the victim is permitted a new save every 24 hours. If a subsequent save succeeds, the umbral spy must depart. Unless the subject detects the attack normally—such as by spotting the umbral spy—he might remain unaware that he has been compromised, since the shadow bond attack itself does not automatically alert the victim that anything has happened. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Thought Link (Su) An umbral spy can choose to instantly share anything it has experienced in the past week with any living creature within 10 feet. It normally uses this ability to deliver any secrets or information it has acquired.

Skills An umbral spy has a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a –4 penalty on Hide checks.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

The umbral spy was designed for espionage, but anyone who assumes that means the creature cannot fight is a fool. Umbral spies engage in combat to defend themselves, if doing so is necessary to escape with captured information, or if they are commanded to do so by their controllers. Sometimes they attack a group and then flee, in hopes of splitting it up so they can double back and bond with a single member undetected.

Although not very intelligent, umbral spies have a degree of innate cunning, and certain combat tactics are built into their nature. They prefer hit-and-run tactics, fighting for several rounds and then hiding for a bit, only to come at their foes again later. When possible, they focus their attacks on a single foe in an attempt to incapacitate through Wisdom damage even if they cannot kill through normal damage. This is sometimes a precursor to a shadow bond attempt, because the Wisdom damage makes the save to resist that much harder. As incorporeal creatures, umbral spies have many venues for retreat, and never hesitate to do so to protect their captured intelligence unless directly ordered otherwise.

SAMPLE ENCOUNTERS

Umbral spies normally operate alone, though sometimes a mission of espionage is so urgent that anywhere from two to half a dozen are sent after to bond with multiple people, in hopes of obtaining the same information.

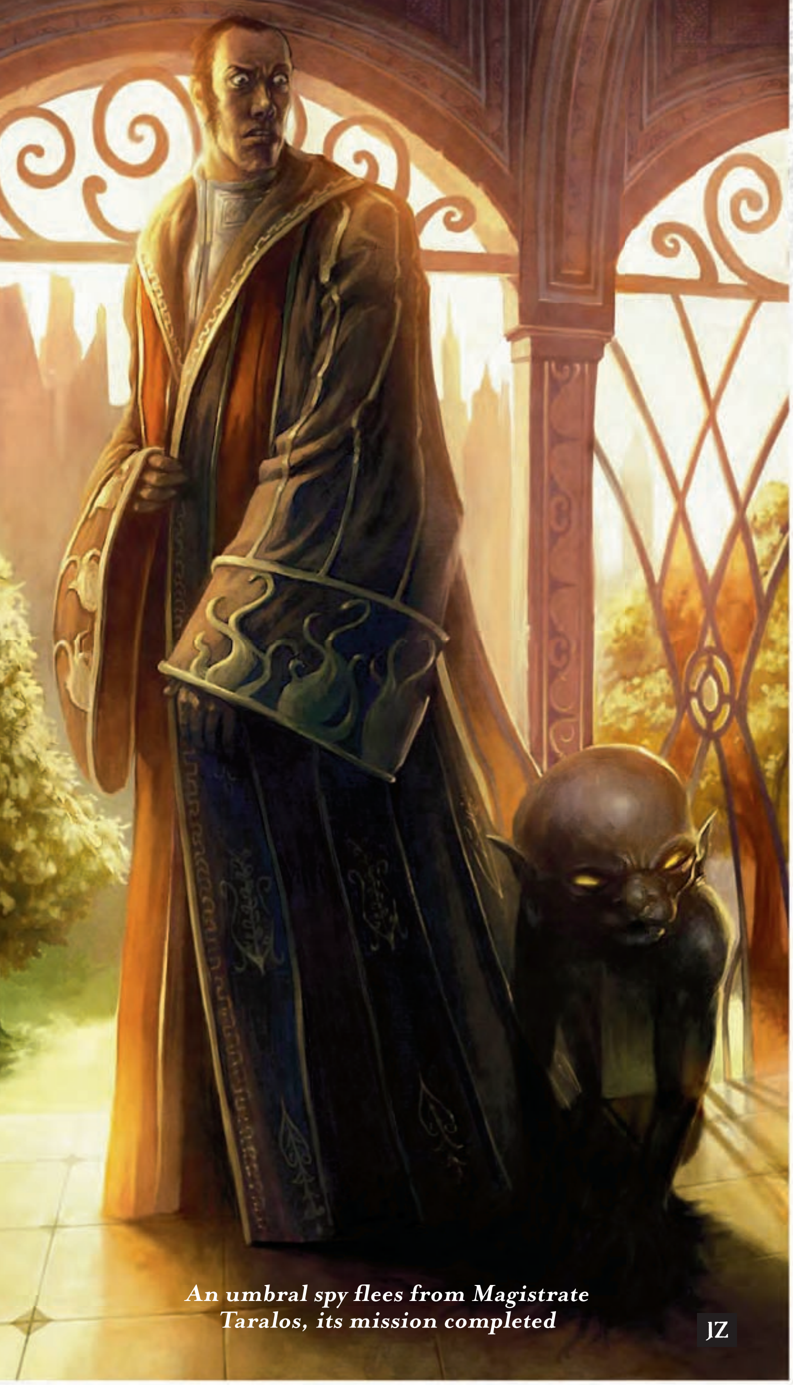
Spy (EL 3): A lone umbral spy seeks either to bond with an individual who has access to the information it was sent for, or to escape after retrieving said information.

Rendezvous (EL 5): The PCs, after much investigation, discover that an umbral spy has been "visiting" a particular noble on a regular basis, using him to obtain classified information. Upon confronting the noble (male human aristocrat 4), the PCs learn that he is not, in fact, the victim of espionage, but a double agent himself. The umbral spy was not bonding to him in order to gain information, but to report the secrets it stole from other nobles, which he would then send back to his home government. The PCs must not only battle the umbral spy, but also the man they thought they came to warn.

ECOLOGY

Umbral spies are intelligent (albeit not very) constructs. They have no corporeal bodies, and as constructs they have no biological needs such as food or sleep.

The process of creating an umbral spy also creates a small charm made of bone that can be used to control it. The umbral spy faithfully obeys the orders



An umbral spy flees from Magistrate Taralos, its mission completed

of whoever carries the talisman, and is intelligent enough to understand relatively complex commands. It cannot, however, communicate with its controller outside its normal telepathic range. If faced with a situation it cannot puzzle out, or an impediment that prevents it from achieving an assigned goal, it returns for further instruction.

Umbral spies were originally the creation of the King's Citadel in Breland, relatively early in the war. Although they found the activity distasteful, some of the Dark Lanterns and other Citadel researchers experimented with necromantic techniques, in hopes of creating troops that would be as potent as the undead soldiers of Karrnath. They achieved little in that endeavor, but they did discover a process by which the lingering spark of life in a dead changeling, doppelganger, or other shapeshifting humanoid—the same "residual energy" contacted by the *speak with dead* spell—could be combined with shadow-based magic to create an entirely new entity. Thus was born the first umbral spy, a construct with no physical form. Ironically, Breland wasn't able to keep the secret long; Aundair succeeded in scrying on their efforts and creating their own umbral spies. By the end of the war, all the nations (and several dragonmarked houses and powerful guilds) had access to them.

Environment: As constructs, umbral spies have no native environment. They appear wherever they are ordered to go, which usually means the hearts of various urban and metropolitan areas.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Umbral spies appear as vaguely humanoid blots of shadow that flit about as effortlessly as feathers on the wind. They stand roughly 3 feet in height, and if somehow magically forced into physical form, they weigh 25 pounds or so.

Alignment: Umbral spies are always neutral. Their intelligence, such as it is, is limited to the proper performance of their duties and does not extend to the contemplation of moral or ethical positions.

CONSTRUCTION

An umbral spy is made from the residual life force of a dead humanoid shapechanger, as described above, and the controlling charm is made from a piece of the corpse's skull or ribs. In addition, the process requires the casting of shadow-based magic and the infusion of powdered onyx. The materials cost 500 gp. Creating an umbral spy requires a successful DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check and a DC 15 Spellcraft check.

An umbral spy of higher Hit Dice can be created, but each additional Hit Die adds 2,500 gp to the cost to create.

CL 7th; Craft Construct, *shadow conjuration, speak with dead;* Price — (never sold); Cost 11,000 gp + 840 XP.

UMBRAL SPY LORE

Characters who have ranks in Knowledge (arcana) can research umbral spies to learn more about them. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

Knowledge (arcana)

DC	Result
13	Despite its shadowy, insubstantial nature, this is not an undead but an artificial construct. Called an umbral spy, it is used to gather information and intelligence.
18	An umbral spy can literally bond with a subject's shadow, allowing it to accompany him undetected and see everything he sees. It can then return to its controller and bond with her, feeding her all the sounds and images it recorded.
23	The touch of an umbral spy drains the common sense, perception, and strength of will from its enemies. Each umbral spy is bound to a small charm of bone, which allows the bearer to control it. This result also reveals the means by which an umbral spy is created.

WARFORGED RAPTOR

Four rounded leathery wings hold an enormous metallic body aloft. In silhouette, you could almost mistake the creature for a giant dragonfly, but only on a first, casual glance. Where you might expect a squat insectoid head, it boasts instead a long segmented neck, atop which is a featureless mass angled like a great hawk's beak or the striking end of a heavy pick. Rather than the graceful tail of a dragonfly, it sprouts a fan of metal, almost like tailfeathers of burnished mithral.

The warforged raptor is a construct of battle, designed by House Cannith for sale to those nations who required a counter to the Aundairian dragonhawks and Thrane wyverns. Although only moderately suited to combat against other aerial foes, the raptors are deadly when deployed against ground-based targets.

WARFORGED RAPTOR CR 8

Usually LN Large construct
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +16
Languages understands Common

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19
(–1 size, +3 Dex, +10 natural)
hp 96 (12 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine
Immune construct immunities (*MM* 307)
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, sonic 10
Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

Speed 15 ft. (3 squares), fly 90 ft. (average); Flyby Attack
Melee slam +15 (1d8+10/×4) and
2 wing buffets +10 each (1d6+3)
Ranged rock +15 (2d6+7)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with slam)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +20
Atk Options Power Attack, mighty throw, power dive, strafe

Abilities Str 25, Dex 16, Con —, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 1
Feats Flyby Attack, Hover, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Wingover
Skills Listen +1, Spot +16
Advancement 13–24 HD (Large); 25–36 HD (Huge)

Mighty Throw (Ex) A warforged raptor uses Strength rather than Dexterity to modify its ranged attacks.

Power Dive (Ex) If a flying warforged raptor makes a charge attack against an opponent on the ground, it can make a full attack.

Rock-Throwing (Ex) A warforged raptor can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each (Small objects), with a range increment of 120 feet. A Huge raptor can hurl rocks weighing 60 to 80 pounds each (Medium objects), with a range increment of 180 feet.

Strafe (Ex) If a flying warforged raptor moves at its full speed in a straight line, it can make three ranged boulder attacks over the course of its flight, rather than one. Each attack occurs roughly one-third of the way along its line of movement. (Thus, for a standard raptor, the first attack occurs 30 feet from its starting point, the second at 60 feet, and the third at 90 feet.) Each of these attacks must be made against separate targets, even if the rocks' range increment would normally allow them to all strike the same one.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Raptors prefer to make attacks from the air against ground-based targets, fully employing their Flyby Attack and strafe abilities. Although their power dive attack is devastating, most raptors use it only to finish off a foe they've already softened up, since they are incredibly slow once on the ground. Whether airborne or not, a warforged raptor prefers to focus its attacks against a single target until it is well and truly smashed, before moving on to the next. It reserves its strafe attack for multiple strikes against weak foes, such as standard low-level soldiers, or for devastating multiple sections of defensive fortifications.

SAMPLE ENCOUNTERS

Although warforged raptors function best in flights, or paired with other war-machines, their relative scarcity means that they most frequently operate alone.

Sentry (EL 8): A lone warforged raptor functions well as an airborne patrol, eliminating enemy scouting parties that cross into its master's territory.

WARFORGED RAPTOR LORE

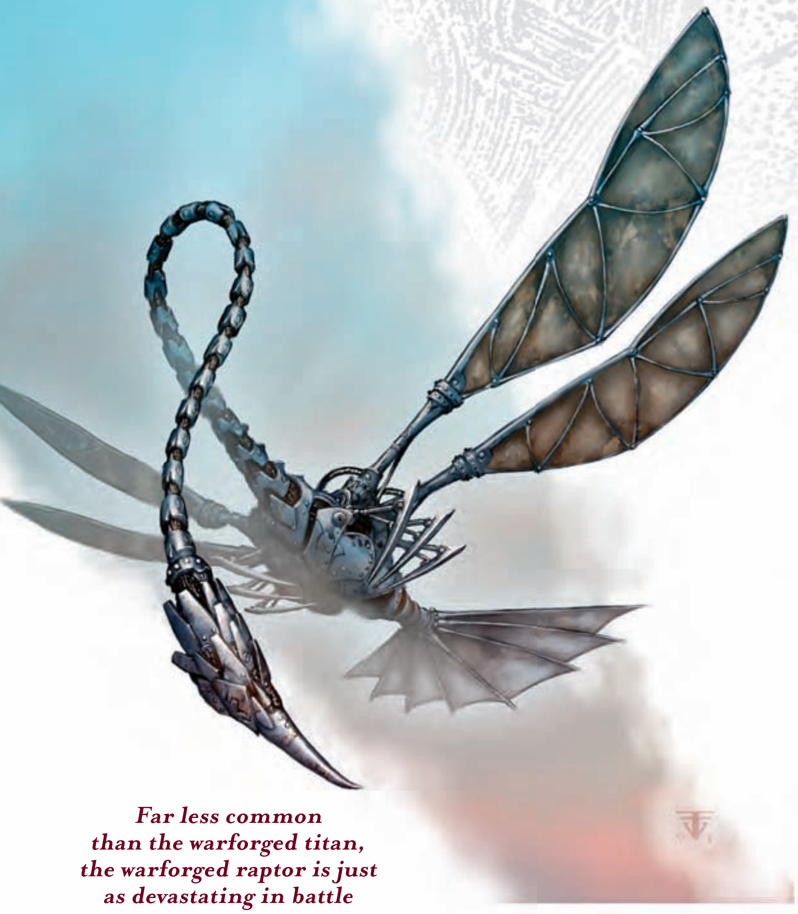
Characters who have ranks in Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (history) can research warforged raptors to learn more about them. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

Knowledge (arcana)

DC	Result
18	The warforged raptor is a construct built for war, and particularly deadly when attacking from the air. This result reveals all construct traits.
23	Raptors are, like warforged titans, intelligent enough to perform minor acts of problem-solving and to learn relatively complex tactics. They are not sentient, however, and are just as mindlessly loyal as any other construct. This result also reveals all the raptor's standard attacks, including its power dive and strafe abilities.

Knowledge (history)

DC	Result
18	House Cannith developed the warforged raptor not long after it created the titan, but never produced the raptor in large numbers due to the cost of the mithral infusions necessary to make it light enough for flight.
23	Cyre and Breland made the heaviest use of warforged raptors, though nearly all the nations acquired at least a few of them at various points. After developing the process that created the true warforged, House Cannith contemplated creating a sentient version of the raptor, but rejected the notion after deciding there was no real advantage to doing so. Some rumors do suggest that a few sentient raptors, perhaps half a dozen or so, were developed as test models.



Far less common than the warforged titan, the warforged raptor is just as devastating in battle

Flight (EL 10–13): A flight of two to six raptors can devastate entire companies, or obliterate fortified keeps and strongholds, with a few simple strafing runs. It was this usage for which the warforged raptor was truly designed.

Air and Ground (EL 10): Several of the militaries of the Last War, particularly Cyre, occasionally pair a warforged raptor with a warforged titan (*ECS* 302). Between the two, the titan wading into melee while the raptor strikes from above or lands to flank, they can smash through most opponents with brutal efficiency.

ECOLOGY

As constructs, warforged raptors neither contribute to nor feed from the environment. They are completely outside nature.

Although equally as effective as the warforged titan—indeed, even more so under some circumstances—the raptor was never put into mass production. In order to enable it to fly, even with magical aid, the raptor's creators had to infuse notable amounts of mithral into the heavier iron and steel that make up the bulk of the warforged body. As such, the raptor was never sufficiently cost-effective for widespread use, and only a few hundred were constructed over the entire course of the Last War.

Environment: Any aboveground. Raptors go wherever they are ordered to fight, but because they are at their best attacking from above, they are rarely assigned to areas with substantial ground cover such as forests. Warforged raptors are seen far more frequently near the borders between hostile nations than they are deep within a given nation's territory.

Typical Physical Characteristics: A standard warforged raptor measures roughly 10 feet in length, over half of which is its segmented neck, and has a wingspan of almost 15 feet. Due to its frame-based construction and the inclusion of mithral, it is unusually light for its size, weighing roughly 1,250 pounds. It has no obvious sensory organs on its beaklike head, which serves as its primary weapon. A raptor has six insectoid legs, and four dragonflylike wings, constructed of leather on a metal frame. Although a raptor requires all four of its wings for efficient flight, it is capable of flying or hovering using only two wings for brief periods, allowing it to make wing buffet attacks even when in the air.

Early raptors carry a large leather pouch slung under the abdomen, containing small boulders for use with their rock-throwing attack. The pouch holds only half a dozen such boulders, allowing a raptor to make only six ranged attacks, or two full rounds of strafing. Later models incorporate additional magic in their construction that allows them to carry pouches full of fist-sized rocks that literally grow into boulders as the raptor hurls them. These later models have, for all practical purposes, an infinite supply of ammunition.

Alignment: Imbued with a modicum of intelligence, warforged raptors are usually lawful neutral—smart enough to prefer to cling to rules and order, but unconcerned with the moral implications of their actions. A few warforged raptors drift toward evil alignments and cruel dispositions; good-aligned raptors are rare.

ABOUT THE DESIGNERS

JAMES WYATT won an Origins award for *City of the Spider Queen*. He also wrote *Oriental Adventures* and has contributed to numerous roleplaying game products, including the *EBERRON Campaign Setting, Sharn: City of Towers, Heroes of Horror,* and *Draconomicon: The Book of Dragons*. His first EBERRON novel, *In the Claws of the Tiger*, was published in July 2006. He lives in Washington State with his wife, Amy, and their son, Carter.

ARI MARMELL has contributed to over forty RPG and fiction products, including *Vampire: The Requiem*, multiple books in the Scarred Lands setting, *Egyptian Adventures: Hamunaptra, Dawnforge*, and the novel *Gehenna: The Final Night*. His recent work for Wizards of the Coast includes *Heroes of Horror, Tome of Magic,* and *Faiths of Eberron*. He lives with his wife, two cats, and an entire pack of neuroses (EL 12).

WOLFGANG BAUR began his gaming career writing articles for *Dungeon* Magazine and eventually joined the magazine staff as an editor. He later worked as a game designer for both TSR, Inc., and Wizards of the Coast, Inc. He is the coauthor of the *Dark*Matter* campaign setting, *Expedition to the Demonweb Pits,* and *Frostburn,* and the author of *The Book of Roguish Luck*. He lives in Kirkland, Washington, with his wife and daughter.

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